

**Neighborhood as refuge: Environmental justice and community
reconstruction in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana**

by

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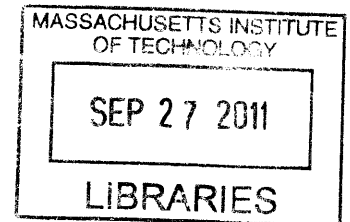
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Abstract

Environmental Justice (EJ) scholarship has revealed that communities of color and low-income neighborhoods have been disproportionately affected by 'brown' contaminating facilities and excluded from decision-making on their land, and that residents have used a variety of strategies to address such injustices (Bullard 1990, Agyeman 2003, Susskind and Macey 2004, Corburn, 2005, Pellow and Brulle 2005, Schlosberg 2007). However, traditional EJ literature tends to overlook the fact that residents also fight to achieve long-term equitable revitalization and improve the livability and environmental quality of their neighborhoods through parks, playgrounds, community gardens, fresh markets, and improved waste management. Furthermore, previous studies have not examined the role of historic marginalization, threats of displacement, collective identities, and political systems in framing the demands and strategies of these marginalized neighborhoods, especially in different cities and political systems across the world.

My dissertation is motivated by this overarching question: How and why do residents of seemingly powerless marginalized neighborhoods proactively organize to improve environmental quality and livability? To answer this question, I focus on three sub-questions: In what ways do residents and organizations engaged in environmental quality initiatives perceive that their work allowed them to re-build their community from within? To what extent do the environmental struggles of marginalized communities represent a desire to achieve environmental gains as opposed to serving as a means to advance broader political agendas in the city? How do different political systems and contexts of urbanization shape the strategies and tactics that neighborhoods develop and how do they manage to advance their goals?

My dissertation is built around an international comparative study of three critical and emblematic case studies of minority and low-income neighborhoods organizing for improved environmental quality and livability in three cities – Casc Antic (Barcelona), Dudley (Boston), Cayo Hueso (Havana), – which have all achieved comparable improved environmental and health conditions around parks and playgrounds, sports courts and centers, community gardens, urban farms, farmers' markets, and waste management. During my eight-month fieldwork in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, I conducted semi-structured interviews with leaders of local organizations and NGOs working on improving environmental conditions, with a sample of active residents in each neighborhood, and with municipal agencies and policy-makers. Furthermore, I engaged in observation of events, as well as participant observation of projects focused on environmental improvements. Last, I collected secondary data on neighborhood development, land use, and environmental and health projects.

This study reveals that activists in Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso use their environmental and health endeavors to holistically re-build and repair a broken and devastated community and build safe havens, associating environmental justice with community development, and improvements in physical health with mental health support. They also frame broader political goals in the city such as addressing stigmas about their place, controlling the land and its boundaries, and building a more transgressive and spontaneous form of democracy. These goals reflect and are reinforced by the attachment and sense of community they feel for their neighborhood. To develop their vision, residents select multi-faceted and multi-tiered strategies, which reveal common patterns across neighborhoods despite differences in political systems: collage and bricolage techniques, broad coalitions and sub-community networks, clever engagement with public officials and funders, and local identity and traditions. This research extends EJ theory by focusing on how residents and their supporters make proactive environmental and health claims and defend their vision for improved neighborhood conditions and safety, gain political power, and address inequalities in planning and land use decisions.

“La forme d'une ville change plus vite, hélas! que le coeur d'un mortel” – Charles
Baudelaire, Le Cygne (Les Fleurs du Mal)

"The form of a city changes faster than the souls of its residents"

Acknowledgements

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1 Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

In 2001, poor Spanish and immigrant residents in the Casc Antic of Barcelona joined together to revitalize abandoned areas of the old town by beautifying community spaces, self-managing new parks and playgrounds, and building community gardens despite the opposition of city officials and confrontations with police forces. Their actions built upon the fights of neighborhood organizations for a just, participatory, and livable city since the transition to democracy after dictator's Franco death in 1975. Similarly, since 1988, inhabitants and organizations from the Afro-Cuban neighborhood of Cayo Hueso, Havana, have organized to bring in long-lasting environmental and health improvements to the degraded neighborhood, participating in government-sponsored workshops while skillfully negotiating for independent decision-making. Their projects included the repair and expansion of sports grounds, rehabilitation of unsanitary housing structures, improved waste management, community gardens, and public art in place of crumbling buildings. In the 1980s, Dudley street, a Cape-Verdean, Latino, and African American neighborhood next to downtown Boston, was an abandoned, violence-ridden, and arson-devastated area of the city. Despite these dire conditions, residents, environmental NGOs and community-organizations joined forces to transform hundreds of empty lots into urban farms, neighborhood parks, healthy fresh food markets and bakery, and sports centers and playgrounds, using a combination of environmental community policing strategies, innovative institutional arrangements with the city, and multi-scale coalitions.

These cases illustrate the emergence of residents in historically marginalized urban neighborhoods actively organizing for improved environmental quality in degraded and abandoned spaces, including in cities with different levels of democratization and development, as well as contexts of urbanization and marginalization. In their initiatives, local residents and organizations often focus on accessible green and recreational spaces, community gardens and farmers' markets, walkable and bikable communities, green and healthy housing, and improved waste management (Diaz, 2005; Gottlieb, 2005). In many instances, such projects are vehicles for improving the livability of urban neighborhoods, creating agreeable communities, and decreasing criminality (Bell, Wilson, & Liu, 2008; Birch & Wachter, 2008; Cradock et al., 2005; Diaz, 2005; Gottlieb, 2005; Kuo & Sullivan, 2001; Takano & Tokeshi, 2007). These different initiatives across the world thus raise an important question: Why do similar local patterns of concern, mobilization, and achievement arise in cities with such different political systems and histories of urbanization and marginalization?

Traditional environmental justice research has pointed to the struggles of low-income and minority neighborhoods against environmental hazards and contamination (Bullard, 1990; Carruthers, 2008; Pellow, 2000; Schlosberg, 2007; Varga, Kiss, & Ember, 2002). However, previous studies have mostly overlooked the fact that residents also proactively fight to improve the livability and environmental quality of their neighborhoods in the long term. In other words, researchers have centered their attention on "brown" cases of injustice and on residents and their supporters coalescing around clearly identified environmental threats and environmental harm, rather than on examples of positive and proactive struggles for "green" environmental justice and greater livability. Moreover, scholars have not attempted to examine these types of community

organization and mobilization patterns in comparative contexts. Last, environmental justice research in cities, and urban social movement research more broadly, have paid little attention to how community organization and strategies to address environmental injustices are affected by the collective identities of neighborhoods and their interpretation of the political contexts.

As the examples of community organization in Barcelona, Havana, and Boston suggest, despite the fragile socio-economic conditions of some communities and the vulnerable situation of many families, residents in a variety of cities actively participate in the revitalization of their communities and have received widespread support from local organizations. Their struggles challenge conventional wisdom and studies asserting that poor and minority residents do not have the power or resources to organize, are not committed to improve long-term livability, and do not unite beyond fights against “brown” contamination to achieve “green” environmental justice. The organization of marginalized neighborhoods towards equitable urban revitalization and livability suggests that caring for one’s place and (re) building one’s community is not a function of wealth, political systems, or contexts of urbanization. Nor is it a function of imitating trends or following funding opportunities, since community fights can be traced back to the late 1980s when green movements for sustainability in the inner city were still in their early ages. Residents are not following “greening” trends and agendas. Last, their fights challenge assumptions that residents of degraded neighborhoods are eager to move to wealthier areas with better services, housing, and environmental conditions. They question policies such as the de-concentration of poverty, which help residents move to neighborhoods with allegedly greater “opportunities” and diversity (Goetz, 2003; McClure, 2008; Turner, 1998). These realities seem to hold in a variety of contexts and cities.

My dissertation is guided by the overarching question: How and why do residents of seemingly powerless marginalized neighborhoods proactively organize to improve environmental quality and livability? To answer this question, I specifically focus on these three sub-questions: In what ways do residents and organizations engaged in environmental quality initiatives perceive that their work allowed them to re-build their community from within? To what extent do the environmental struggles of marginalized communities represent a desire to achieve environmental gains as opposed to serving as a means to advance broader political agendas in the city? How do different political systems and contexts of urbanization shape the strategies and tactics that neighborhoods develop, and how do they manage to advance their goals?

1.2 Theoretical groundings

This study of historically marginalized urban neighborhoods organizing for higher quality environments is situated at the intersection of three complementary planning fields: urban sociology, environmental policy and planning, and international development. In a few words, low-income and minority neighborhoods, residents have traditionally suffered from disproportionate environmental burden and abandonment and have mobilized against substandard environmental and health conditions. Their fights, however, are grounded in deeper sense of place, community attachments, and urban processes, which impact their claims over time. In order to combat substandard living situations, residents and their supporters have resorted to a variety of strategies and tactics, which have helped them achieve their goals, address inequalities in planning decisions, and gain greater political power in the city.

1.2.1 Traditional and recent perspectives on environmental justice

Life in historically distressed neighborhoods is often closely coupled with degraded infrastructure, substandard services, unhealthy housing structures, and severe environmental hazards. Scholars of environmental justice have commonly focused their attention on the disproportionate exposure of low-income and minority residents to environmental toxins and other health risks, as well as on the structural causes of toxic exposure. Most studies overlook the fact that residents and their supporters also fight to turn around their neighborhoods and rally for long-term environmental quality and livability beyond coalescing against identifiable common enemies. In addition, the definition of what constitutes environmental justice goals is usually confined to more restricted categories than what activists on the ground attempt to achieve. To address these issues, in this section I first review the traditional environmental justice literature and present some evolutions in the types of environmental action in which marginalized neighborhoods engage.

1.2.1.1 Fights against environmental harm and contamination

Minorities and low-income populations have historically been victims of greater environmental harm and have received less environmental protection than white and well-off communities (Bryant & Mohai, 1992; Bullard, 1990; Downey & Hawkins, 2008; Pellow, 2000; Schlosberg, 2007; Varga et al., 2002). In the United States, for instance, locally Unwanted Land Uses (LULUs) such as incinerators, landfills, or refineries have traditionally been located in poor black or Latino communities rather than in affluent suburbs (Bullard, 1990; Pellow, 2000; Schlosberg, 2007). For example, in 1983, more than 60 percent of the Los Angeles' Hispanics lived in waste-site areas compared with 35% of Los Angeles's white population (Bullard, 1990). In Central and Eastern Europe, environmentally hazardous sites and activities, such as illegal car batteries disassembly found in dumps and gas stations, are disproportionately located in areas with a higher concentration of ethnic or national minorities (i.e., Romany (gypsy) populations) (Varga et al., 2002). Likewise, in Southern European regions like Catalunya, the distribution of contaminating industrial facilities such as metal transformation factories, chemical industries or waste management facilities tend to overburden lower-income communities outside Barcelona and Tarragona (Ortega Cerdà & Calaf Forn, 2010). Deprived urban neighborhoods have also tended to get the poorest environmental services, such as street cleaning, open space maintenance, and solid waste management while wealthier and white communities have benefited from environmental privileges – access to parks, coasts, forests, open lands – often in a racially exclusive way (Pellow, 2009). In turn, these imbalances create territorial injustices in the socio-spatial distribution of public goods and services, and trigger feelings of abandonment, exclusion, as well as unwanted social behavior such as crime and violence (Birch & Wachter, 2008; Harvey, 1973; Hastings, 2007; Kuo & Sullivan, 2001).

In a similar way, in the global South, the lands of poor and minority populations have been disproportionately affected by environmental hazards, contamination, and intensive resource extraction. Over the past few decades, millions of hectares in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have been devastated by mercury spills from gold mines, oil and timber extraction, deforestation and erosion from widespread farming, and giant hydroelectric dams (Ahmad, 1999; Brysk, 2000; Carruthers, 2008; Evans, Goodman, & Lansbury, 2002; Hilson, 2002; Martínez Alier, 2002). For instance, in the Andes and Amazon of South America or in Ogoniland in Nigeria, indigenous

peoples have suffered from the destructive impacts of oil and mining extraction on their health and food sources, leading to the disruption of their nutrition patterns and to increased rates of cancer (Bastos et al., 2006; Christian Aid, 2005; Sebastián, Armstrong, Córdoba, & Stephens, 2001; Wheatley & Wheatley, 2000). In addition, Southern governments are generally less capable and willing to regulate and control transnational industries (Newell 2001, Vogel 2006), which exacerbates abuses and neglect on the ground. Beyond the extraction of raw materials or contamination of land and water resources, Northern nations and corporations have also exported millions of tons of toxic waste from industry, agriculture, consumers, public institutions, and computer and electronic products to poorer countries (Martínez Alier, 2002; Pellow, 2007). This waste contributes to increased elevated rates of human mortality and ecosystem damage among affected communities (Pellow, 2007). Last, in regards to global environmental change, climate impacts tend to exacerbate inequalities between the North and South and reinforce existing injustices within countries. For instance, poor residents, who tend to live in areas exposed to unstable climate (i.e., floodplains, coastlines, and hillsides) are often the most vulnerable to extreme weather events (Anguelovski & Roberts, 2011; Parks & Roberts, 2006).

Environmental injustices often stem from the lack of recognition of identity and difference between groups and individuals, and the lack of attention to the social context in which unjust distribution occurs (Schlosberg, 2007). In this regard, environmental inequalities reflect broader societal problems such as the unequal distribution of power at the intersection of environmental quality and social hierarchies, by which people and agencies deny rights and identities to certain groups (Pellow, 2000). Over time, multiple structures of domination in society create and reproduce environmental injustices and discriminatory practices (Honneth, 1992; Pellow, 2000; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Young, 1990). In other words, the disproportionate exposure of communities of color to environmental hazards often results from social processes such as racial discrimination in housing rentals or sales and in the enforcement of zoning and environmental protection laws which structure the political economy of marginalized communities (Foster, 1998). At the global level, transnational environmental inequalities reflect similar dynamics of marginalization. Inequalities in regards to toxic exposure or resource extraction call for the use of a life-cycle approach to consumption, production, and hazards, putting the exportation of environmental bads in perspective with a political analysis of North-South relations. Poorer countries and communities suffer from the disproportionate impacts of the “treadmill of production¹,” and do not have the capacity to impose their own rules (Pellow, 2000; Schnaiberg, 1980; Schnaiberg & Gould, 1994; Schnaiberg, Pellow, & Weinberg, 2002).

In turn, such environmental inequalities have given rise to the growth of environmental justice movements demanding environmental equality between groups and individuals. These demands were initially rooted in a civil rights framework, and have more recently been framed through a human rights approach and a call for the construction of sustainable communities (Bullard, 2005; McGurty, 2000; Pellow & Brulle, 2005). Similarly, in the global South, abuses

¹ The Treadmill of Production was a model initially developed by Alan Schainberg. According to Schnaiberg, progress in technology drives the expansion of production and consumption in a synergetic way. This process triggers a cycle of production which always asks for more production since the state, labor, and capital are dependent on continued economic growth to achieve their own goals (i.e., job creation). In such a model, environmental problems will continue to arise because growth cycles require new material inputs and produce negative environmental impacts through the extraction of natural resources and the generation of contamination.

among marginalized populations have led to environmental mobilization, as well as to deep ecological and distributional conflicts against the structures of economic and political power. In these conflicts, local groups and their supporters question the private appropriation of communal livelihoods and articulate claims of local sustainability (Martínez Alier, 2002; Pellow, 2007). Eventually, the social and environmental exclusion of low-income populations and communities of color can only be addressed through the elimination of institutionalized economic, social, and political domination (Foster, 1998; Young, 1990). In other words, achieving environmental justice will involve “the radical transformation of individuals, communities, and societies, which produces social justice, economic vitality, and the [...] confrontation with systems of power that profit from environmental injustice” (Pellow, 2009).

1.2.1.2 Broader understandings of environmental justice and livability

The conventional environmental justice scholarship contains two core limitations: First, most scholarly work focused on environmental justice is limited to studying “brown” visions of the environment and analyzing core environmental threats and hazards to the health and livelihoods of marginalized communities.² Second, most authors limit their view on what constitutes “the environment” of places and people and pre-define what is environmental justice literature.³ Through my dissertation, I question traditional understandings and boundaries of environmental justice scholarship. More generally, I challenge what the environment represents in the life of low-income and minority neighborhoods and concentrate my attention on proactive environmental revitalization rather than on reactive conflicts.

To achieve this, it is important, firstly, to look back at the broader philosophy and underpinnings of the EJ movement. Environmental justice activists have often portrayed themselves in opposition to the conventional environmental movement, at least in the United States, arguing that environmental NGOs reify the environment as pristine and wild ecosystems to be protected while putting people second or raising concern about contamination outside of its broader socio-economic and cultural framework. (Bullard, 1990; Gauna, 2008; Schlosberg, 2007; Shutkin, 2000). Traditional environmental organizations have frequently been described by EJ groups as defenders of policies and programs that leave vulnerable communities without access to traditional resources, jobs, livelihoods, without a protection of their sovereignty and self-determination rights (i.e. native tribes in the US and abroad), and without meaningful participation in decision-making that affect their land (Ali, 2003; Noriko, 2003).

² Notable exceptions are: Pellow, David N., and Robert J. Brulle. *Power, Justice, and the Environment : A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement*, Urban and Industrial Environments. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2005. Or Agyeman, Julian, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans. *Just Sustainabilities : Development in an Unequal World*. 1st MIT Press (eds.), Urban and Industrial Environments. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

³ The vision for the recently created Environmental Justice Journal confirms these trends and priorities: “The Journal explores the adverse and disparate environmental burden impacting marginalized populations and communities all over the world. [...] The Journal addresses (a) Studies that demonstrate the adverse health affects on populations who are most subject to health and environmental hazards, (b) the protection of socially, politically, and economically marginalized communities from environmental health impacts and inequitable environmental burden, (c) the prevention and resolution of harmful policies, projects, and developments and issues of compliance and enforcement, activism, and corrective actions. For more detail, see liebertpub.com/products/product.aspx?pid=259

In response, environmental justice organizations have redefined “environment” as the place where people live, work, learn and play, and have defended the right of every person of all races, incomes, and culture to a decent and safe quality of life (Gauna, 2008). Their demands have also been interpreted as the “environmentalism of the poor,” which has as its main interest “not in a sacred reverence for Nature, but a material interest in the environment as a source and a requirement for livelihood; not so much a concern with the rights of other species and of future generations of humans as a concern for today’s poor humans” (Martínez Alier, 2002), p.11. As they struggle for their lives and livelihoods, they express and defend a different set of environmental values than traditional environmental movements, which are shaped by their experiences, cultural contexts, and political realities (Bauer, 2006).

More recently, the environmental justice agenda has expanded to include the right to well-connected, affordable, and clean transit systems in cities (Agyeman & Evans, 2003; Loh & Eng, 2010; Loh & Sugerman-Brozán, 2002) and the right to healthy, fresh, local, and affordable food and community food security – in opposition to low-quality food produced unsafely in remote locations – (Gottlieb, 2005, 2009). Organizations have also begun to advocate for green, affordable healthy housing along with recycling practices and garden practices inside the housing complexes (Loh & Eng, 2010) or to providing economic opportunities for poor and disenfranchised communities around the green economy (Fitzgerald, 2010). The inclusion of these different issues reflects the philosophy of the environmental justice movement, which ties environmentalism to a broader quest for social and economic justice and asserts the social equity and wealth creation dimensions of the concept of sustainability (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003; Loh & Eng, 2010).⁴

Likewise, in the global South, environmental justice activists are advocating for greater voice in matters of social justice, indigenous peoples’ rights, access to land, labor rights, wealth redistribution, and opportunities for engaged participation in land use decisions (Carruthers, 2008; Evans et al., 2002; Martínez Alier, 2002; Martínez-Alier, 2001; Newell, 2005). In urban settings, the search for greater environmental quality and access to environmental benefits for poor and minority residents in cities of the South has rarely been called or analyzed as environmental justice. Scholars have referred to the concept of “urban livability”, putting an emphasis both on cities providing decent livelihoods for ordinary residents and becoming ecologically sustainable. Making cities more livable involves providing affordable housing, decent infrastructure, and healthy habitats while maintaining the ecological bases of the space (Evans, 2002). However, such a call for livability has left little room for a thorough analysis of agency among distressed communities and for a belief in the will and capacity of such

⁴ For specific examples, see the websites of some environmental justice organizations in the United States: ACE-EJ (<http://www.ace-ej.org/>), Communities for a Better Environment (<http://www.cbecal.org/>), Power U (<http://www.poweru.org/>), Environmental Health Coalition (<http://www.environmentalhealth.org/>), West Harlem Environmental Action (<http://www.weact.org/>), Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice (<http://www.dwej.org/>), or the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (<http://www.NYCEJA.org/>). At the global level, see the websites of important environmental justice networks and organizations: The Southwest Network for Environmental & Economic Justice (<http://www.sneej.org/>), the Asia Pacific Environmental Network (<http://www.apen4ej.org/>), the Indigenous Environmental Network (<http://www.ienearth.org/>), Amazon Watch (<http://www.amazonwatch.org/>), the Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflict (www.conflictosmineros.net) and the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (<http://www.bcb.uwc.ac.za/inforeep/EJNF.htm>).

communities to rally for urban livability – except against collective bads. The notion of justice and rights is entirely absent from this analysis of urban livability. More emphasis is given on the concept of sustainability and the importance of NGO-Community alliance and state-society synergy in developing countries to achieve urban livability (Evans, 2002).

The demands of historically distressed communities indicate a clear and pervasive relation between environmental inequalities and health issues. As mentioned above, environmental air and water contamination is directly related to public health problems such as respiratory diseases, infectious diseases, or cancers (Brulle & Pellow, 2006). Low-income populations and communities of color are also less likely to live close to parks, playgrounds, fitness clubs, community centers and other physical activity facilities (Estabrooks, Lee, & Gyurcsik, 2003; Lovasi, Hutson, Guerra, & Neckerman, 2009), with then subsequent disparities in health-related behaviors and obesity at the individual level. Residents from marginalized neighborhoods have limited ability to control their physical activity in the face of inaccessible environments (Estabrooks et al., 2003). Similar relationships exist between inequitable distribution of grocery stores and fresh food options by SES and race and ethnicity. Compared to the poorest neighborhoods, larger numbers of supermarkets, fewer numbers of fast foods, greater number of fruit and vegetable markets and bakeries are located in wealthier neighborhoods (Moore & Diez Roux, 2006) – there are four times more supermarkets located in white neighborhoods compared to black neighborhoods. (Morland, Wing, Diez Roux, & Poole, 2002). Consequently, poor and minority communities do not have equal access to the variety of healthy food choices available to nonminority and richer neighborhoods and are “food deserts” (Gallagher, 2006), which are closely associated with higher rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and atherosclerosis (Dunn, 2010; Morland, Wing, & Roux, 2002).

In the global North and South, marginalized communities in cities such as Havana, Barcelona, and Boston are organizing around a variety of environmental and health issues. Their mobilization challenges conventional wisdom and academic works asserting that poor and minority residents do not have the power or resources to organize, are not committed to improve the long-term livability of their place, and do not unite beyond fights against “brown” contaminating facilities to achieve “green” environmental justice. The organization of distressed neighborhoods towards equitable revitalization and livability also indicate that caring for one’s place and (re) building one’s community is not dependent on income levels, political systems, or contexts of urbanization. Neither is it a function of pursuing trendy funding, since community fights can be traced back to the late 1980s when green movements for urban sustainability were still nascent. Communities of color do not mean to follow greening trends and agendas. Last, their struggles question arguments and policies assuming that residents living in devastated neighborhoods are eager to move to richer areas with improved services, housing opportunities, and environmental conditions, promoting the de-concentration of poverty, and helping people move to areas with allegedly greater “opportunities” and diversity (Goetz, 2003; McClure, 2008; Turner, 1998). And these commonalities seem to hold no matter which context we consider.

In other words, the efforts, narratives, and strategies of marginalized communities fighting towards environmental justice in cities do not stop at struggles against clearly identifiable “brown” contamination sources, in favor of environmental remediation, and for the transformation of land into parks or urban forests. In that sense, this study focuses on a variety of health and environmental improvements in urban distressed neighborhoods from the standpoint

of the residents and organizations working on the ground. Their work and vision is broad and encompassing, and provides a rather new lens on what constitute improved environmental conditions. Environmental justice is more holistic, and activists do not envision their work in silos or compartments (i.e., “housing”, “social work”, “environment”, etc) separated from each other. Such initiatives and positionings also call for inserting notions of community, place, and space in environmental justice scholarship, which have been so far mostly ignored.

1.2.2 Connection to place as basis for community engagement

The mobilization of marginalized communities for greater environmental quality and livability does not occur in isolation. Struggles are grounded in a space and place, towards which residents display a strong attachment and identity. In return, a strong sense of place and sense of community has an impact on community engagement. However, previous environmental justice research has neglected to incorporate notions of place attachment and identity (re)construction into the analysis of community struggles.

1.2.2.1 Notions of place attachment and sense of community

In environmental and community psychology, “place” refers to the social meaning and construction of a locale while the production of this locale and the flows circulating through it refer to the idea of “space” (Castells, 1999; Gottdiener, 1994; Lefebvre, 1991). The concept of place is imbued with layers of sedimented meaning derived from tradition, memory, identification, and sentiment in regards to a specific location (Corcoran, 2002). A variety of concepts illustrate the emotional connections that people develop to a place as a fundamental element of people’s lived experiences and the meanings they assign to it. “Place attachment” is defined as an affective bond between people and places and includes different actors, relationships and spaces (Low & Altman, 1992). Feelings of belonging and attachment to a community are commonly based on four dimensions: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Attachment can rest on physical features and settings as well as social dimensions (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Bonds to ones’ neighborhoods have been shown to be particularly strong (Manzo, 2003). Two dimensions of attachment are striking at the neighborhood scale: *bondedness* (feelings or being part of a neighborhood) and *rootedness* to the community (Riger & Lavrakas, 1981).

Essential to the understanding of place attachment and sense of community is the idea that people’s attachment is linked to identity formation and protection of identity (Altman, Low, & Maretzki, 1992; Kefalas, 2003; Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). “Place identity” is a dynamic concept that emerges out of people’s relation to the physical, political and environmental world around them, and gets shaped through their experiences and interactions that create specific values and beliefs (Bondi, 1993; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). It is thus intimately connected to memory (Hayden, 1995). As Leonie Sandercock writes, “Memory locates us, as part of a family history, as part of a tribe or community, as part of city-building and nation-making. Loss of memory is, basically, loss of identity.” (Sandercock, 1998), p. 207. In that sense, memory occupies spaces with deep meanings and significance.

The attachment that people feel towards a place is often connected to their sense of community. “Sense of community” refers to the feelings people have about belonging to a group

and to the strength of attachment they feel for their communities (Doolittle & MacDonald, 1978). It includes the connection to a shared history and shared concerns (Perkins & Long, 2002). Sense of community has been shown to be closely related to social capital (neighboring, citizen participation, collective efficacy, informal social control), communitarianism, place attachment, community confidence, and community satisfaction (Long & Perkins, 2007). For instance, old time residents in a place undergoing transformation express a strong sense of emotional rootedness to their place and feelings of nostalgia embedded in composite memories that include children's games played on the street or sociability between neighbors during a particular hardship (Corcoran, 2002). Often times, urban working-class and minority neighborhoods offer a little piece of village life with vibrant narrow streets and close-knit families who value community lives and patterns (Gans, 1962; Small, 2004).

Notions of place attachment and sense of community are particularly helpful for revealing the ways in which gender, race, or class influence people's feelings about a space and people's uses of places, especially for residents of urban ghettos (Ahrentzen, 1992; Clark, 1989; Manzo, 2003; McAuley, 1998; Pattillo, 2007). Recent ethnographic and community-based research has attempted to locate emotional relationships to places within a larger socio-political context, recognizing the important implications of place attachment in the urban built environment (Butz & Eyles, 1997; Hayden, 1995; Hester, 1993; Hummon, 1992). Residents of marginalized and impoverished neighborhoods construct a personal identity tied to place, develop specific uses for that space, and assign certain meanings to them. For instance, public spaces that integrate natural characteristics (i.e., plants and trees) in distressed neighborhoods provide an important means for the growth of the community, as residents use the space to a greater extent and develop social contacts with each other (Kuo, Sullivan, Coley, & Brunson, 1998). The neighborhood, and the relations that build in it over time are critically important for minority residents (Falk, 2004; Osofsky, 1996; Wiese, 2004) as people's relations through schools, relatives, work, religion, race, and the attachment for the place have created tightly-woven networks of social connections. Enclosed social places such as Black taverns and churches and the practices minority residents develop around them are essential ways for them to find consistent support, comfort, and social reinforcement of their beliefs (Gregory, 1998; May, 2001). Minorities build solidarities within, between, and across spaces. They view space and its components as valuable and finite and as a public responsibility for which all must display strong stewardship (Lipsitz, 2007).

To date, many studies on the meaning of the urban space for residents, and minority residents in particular, are situated at the micro-scale or home level. However, individual attachment to place is often related to the broader social and political contexts in which planners situation their action.

1.2.2.2 Implications of place attachment for collective neighborhood commitment and environmental action

The urban built environment and people's experiences in it have important implications for place attachment and residents' reactions to neighborhood changes and planning processes. This is particularly true, for instance, during the re-development of public spaces (Butz & Eyles, 1997; Hayden, 1995; Hester, 1993; Hummon, 1992). Residents of degraded neighborhoods often contest traditional meanings and stigmas associated with neighborhood degradations and living

in substandard housing conditions, and in turn create meaningful and autonomous images of place and community (Falk, 2004; Gotham & Brumley, 2002). For instance, the lived experiences of residents in HOPE VI projects in the United States reveal – against traditional images on social housing and social inclusion – the presence of well-functioning networks, which allowed residents to lay down roots, create bonds of mutual support with neighbors. In that sense, using place is a “process of place identity construction and disavowal;” [...] “it is the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain a personal identity tied to place” (Gotham, 2003), p.729. Furthermore, neighborhoods that traditionally bear stigmas of degradation, violence, and poverty have been shown to allow residents to create roots, develop place attachment, and grow bonds of mutual support with neighbors, contrary to traditional depictions of severely distressed housing complexes (Manzo, Kleit, & Couch, 2008).

In that sense, emotional connections to a neighborhood depend as much on the individual ties one has created in the neighborhood as on the external social and political processes to which one responds. In many instances, the intimate bond of community identity among residents is the source of social cohesion, shared interests, neighborhood collective action, and eventually political action (Bennett, 1997; Davis, 1991; Gans, 1962; Gotham & Brumley, 2002; Katznelson, 1981; Suttles, 1968; Tilly, 1974; Wellman, 1979). In fact, residents who are more attached to their community interact more with their neighbors, can invest their time, watch over developments in the neighborhoods, and unify others around them (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2004). People more strongly connected to the place where they live feel more obliged to participate in neighborhood activities and in the processes that affect it (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Cohrun, 1994; Davidson & Cotter, 1993).

Such behavior illustrates the idea of *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies, 1957) by which individuals’ collective sentiment and holistic social relationships based on shared cultural values and intimate ties lead them to be more oriented towards the large collective association rather than their own self. In turn, their sentiment triggers behavior of respect, altruism, and cooperation in people’s interactions with others. These actions also appear as counterpoints to claims that capitalism erases the accumulation of shared history, collective memory, and neighborliness of strangers (Sennett, 2007). They also serve as a counterpoint to the disappearance of “civic togetherness” – daily community-based engagement in practices such as local organizations and meetings, which in turn is seen as the cause of decreasing social capital and community (Putnam, 2001). Place attachment works as a basis for resistance against negatively-viewed changes such as gentrification, economic exclusion, new development projects, or encroaching (Corcoran, 2002; Gregory, 1998), and in favor of affordable and good-quality housing. A threat to an individual’s place is considered as a threat to one’s self-identity. Here, modernist planners are often accused of embracing the ideology of development and progress, killing whole communities as they displace people and demolish houses, and leaving residents homeless physically and in their mind as their memories are destroyed (Sandercock, 2003).

Local participation in neighborhood action often is rooted in an indigenous structure of domestic property relations. For instance, common interests in domestic property frequently manifest in fights against threats to land, houses, amenities, or safety (Blum & Kingston, 1984; Cox, 1978, 1982; Davis, 1991; Dreier, 1982; Gotham & Brumley, 2002; Suttles, 1968; Venkatesh, 2000). Interests of equity, liquidity, legacy, security, amenity, and autonomy related to the domestic property can become a seedbed for collective mobilization (Davis, 1991). In

regards to neighborhood revitalization, residents take action to defend economic and housing development, poverty reduction or social welfare programs, or on community organizing against projects threatening housing structures (Fainstein, 2006; Fisher, 1984; Gotham, 1999; Medoff & Sklar, 1994; Pattillo, 2007; Peterman, 2000; Sampson, 2004; Von Hoffman, 2003; Wright, 1997). That said, other behavior and political antagonisms arise in the place of residence.

In the environmental domain, the identification of threats has triggered action among residents, led to greater participation, and eventually has empowered them to have a say in decision-making (Edelstein, 2003; Rich, Edelstein, Hallman, & Wandersman, 1995; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001). Furthermore, natural attachment can explain people's involvement in protecting a neighborhood environment. Self-reported pro-environmental behavior is more frequent among residents who are attached to their local areas. Specifically, natural place attachment predicts pro-environmental behavior (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In that sense, community mobilization against specific projects that bring with it environmental impact does not only reflect attitudes of NIMBYism. Mobilization in such instances can be analyzed through the lens of the emotional connections and symbolic importance that people assign to a place (Devine-Write, 2003; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001).

While existing research on shared beliefs and sense of community illuminates the variety of instances in which people act at the local level and reveals the role of collective meaning in residents' participation in local actions, few studies have grounded their analysis at the neighborhood level and examined the deeper sense of place and identity that connect people together beyond fights *against* private projects, for public housing, towards upward social mobility (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002), or *against* environmental threats. Little attention has been paid to the relationship between collective identity, use of space, and neighborhood mobilization for improved long-term environmental and health conditions. Furthermore, little is also known about the process and mechanisms that produce and maintain these new environmental spaces, and what are the broader meanings that marginalized residents frame for their struggles. Individuals and groups play a strong role as they act to shape their environments in their daily behavior and use this environment to formulate and negotiate other claims (Manzo, 2003). "Community" is being reshaped and reconstructed through local mobilization and later negotiation with decision-makers and planners. Here, neighborhood-level dynamics, macro-structural forces, and socio-political processes impact community participation in planning issues, and must be incorporated in studies that analyze the relationship between place-based ties to a community and broader commitment to environmental revitalization.

In sum, the fights of urban residents for environmental and health improvements in marginalized neighborhoods must be put in perspective with their attachment to their place and community. In addition, their struggles are not isolated and are situated within a broader context of urban political and socio-economic changes which impact their organization and claims. In the next section, I turn to an analysis of the broader urban developments that have shaped the rise of local contestation.

1.2.3 Urban development and the rise of local contestation

1.2.3.1 Processes of urban change and traditional urban contestation

In the 1920s, the Chicago school of sociology was the center of early studies of urban neighborhood change. Scholars such as Ernest Burgess advanced a deterministic ecological model of invasion and success of low-income classes by picturing concentric circles of groups forming and existing in the city. Later on, scholars took a different approach on urban change. According to political economy perspectives, urban elites, rentiers, and the economic and political coalition formed around them were seen as the motor of unfettered and unregulated economic growth and private capital accumulation, and this at the detriment of social redistribution and mixity, community cohesion, and strong local government (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Mollenkopf, 1983; Squires, 1991). More recently, the integration of cities in the global economy has transformed them into nodes within a global network of financial services and corporate headquarters that attempt to efficiently organize the internationalization of production, finance and information, and attract new residents (Friedmann, 1986; Sassen, 1991; Sassen, 1999). This new role for cities lead them to spatially concentrate resources in accordance with market demand, at the same time as the production process itself is divided up across multiple locations (Borja & Castells, 1997). Eventually, because capitalist investments move from place to place in long cycles of growth, devalorization, destruction, reinvestment, and mobilization, development ends up being spatially uneven throughout the city (Harvey, 1981; Smith, 1982).

The transformation of the urban economy towards a more decentralized, global, and technology-, finance-, and service-focused restructuring has been accompanied by rising socio-economic inequality, between workers with higher education and technological skills and workers who rely more on manual skills and are less technology-savvy (O'Connor, 2001). For instance, low-skilled workers who manage to find jobs are still plagued by low wages and limited fringe benefits (Holzer & Danziger, 2001). In parallel, the transition towards more global and decentralized cities has seen the rise of suburbanization and inter-ethnic conflict between newcomers and older migrants (O'Connor, 2001). In the US, for instance, the growth of suburbanization sprawl has turned into decreased job opportunities and neighborhood degradation for inner city poor and working-class residents, whose race and income prevent them for following the trajectories of labor markets (Massey & Denton, 1993). In European cities such as Barcelona or Paris, the new urbanization processes mesh traditional working-class residents in center neighborhoods with professional groups seeking to move to the urban cultural centers and with new immigrants overpopulating deteriorated districts, which creates tensions between these three groups (Borja & Castells, 1997; Borja, Muxí, & Cenicacelaya, 2004).

Amidst these dynamics of development and exclusion, the urban space has been the object of local political struggles, as a constitutive element of agency and identity for individuals. It is seen as a constraint at times, or a facilitator of collective action at others (Gottdiener, 1994; Lefebvre, 1991; Wright, 1997). Tensions have tended to arise in urban life when two sets of urban relationships – capitalist accumulation and social interaction and community formation or, said differently, place entrepreneurs and community residents – compete against each other (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Mollenkopf, 1981). Conflicts are here the reflections of the underlying tension between capital and labor, and as the embodiment of struggles over the “production, management, and use of the urban built environment” (Harvey, 1978). Urban movements can

often be characterized by a multi-faceted fight: a socio-economic struggle of workers over collective interests, especially collective consumption, combined with a struggle for community culture and political self-determination (Castells, 1983). In their attempt to resist the disruptions and degradations of their neighborhoods and the violence of capitalist accumulation (Harvey, 1981; Smith, 1982), residents are often challenged by larger flows and forces of development that outmaneuver them (Castells, 1983; Sassen, 1991). Because capitalist accumulation has consisted in a geographical dispersal of investments away from politicized center locations as a means of labor control (Harvey, 1996; Merrifield & Swyngedouw, 1997; Soja, 2000), poor workers have seen their place and power become weakened over time.

Aside from these neo-marxist views on urban development and conflicts, local groups in cities articulate demands around a variety of other dimensions that go beyond class interests. Such movements are often organized around gender, race, and ethnicity, as core identities that rally people together (Agyeman et al., 2003; Diaz, 2005; Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Eckstein & Wickham-Crowley, 2003; Gottlieb, 2005; Harvey, 1996; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Schlosberg, 2007; Zald & McCarthy, 1987). For instance, activists and leaders in cities advance that disparities between groups and people can not be understood, nor addressed without confronting the issue of race, ethnicity, and racial discrimination. Race as a core and salient factor of urban inequality manifests itself through multiple experiences that reveal the extent to which class and socio-economic conflicts can not account for all inequalities in cities.

Race is present itself at the individual and the structural levels in the urban arena: It is apparent at the workplace through discriminatory hiring behavior, in urban policies and institutional practices of planning for service delivery and infrastructure construction, in residential mortgage redlining, in educational or health disparities, as well as in attitudes and stereotypes of people (Howell, Peterson, Brookings Institution., Wolf, & Campbell, 2006; Jennings, 1997; Kawachi, Daniels, & Robinson, 2005; Massey & Denton, 1993; O'Connor, 2001; Whitt-Glover et al., 2009). In the United States, for instance, despite the gains of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, the living and working conditions of Black residents have not improved to a significant extent and racial divisions, and tensions are still present in the American society (Jennings, 1997). For example, in 1988, in the City of Boston, 33% of black households were living in poverty (Hayden, 1992). More recent studies have shown that a 40% income gap exists between the incomes of Black and White adults who were raised in families with identical long-run average income (Hertz, 2005), which reveals how entrenched racial disparities remain. In regards to other dimensions of neighborhood development, for instance, children in communities of color have also higher rates of inactivity-related diseases and do not have equal access to recreational facilities due to unsafe structures, higher criminal activity, and lack of playground investments (García & Baltodano, 2005).

1.2.3.2 Recent manifestations of multi-faceted urban movements

More recently, urban movements have seemed to coalesce around broader and more holistic claims. Activists have started to assert progressive values to build a revitalized, cosmopolitan, just, and democratic city (Fainstein, 1999, 2006). Much of the claims of residents and organizations resonate with the idea of the “good city,” a city with a self-organizing and active civil society, resisting within a framework of democratic institutions, and establishing

minimal political, economic, social, and ecological conditions necessary for communities to thrive (Friedmann, 2000). In that sense, a label such as “just city” overlays the normative stance in favor of social equity with the values that guide the creation of the good city (Fainstein, 2006). Achieving a just city involves both focusing on the process of participation, contestation, and democratic planning, as well as on concrete outcomes.

The recent demands of local urban activists are often connected to the traditional notion of “right to the city,” as defined by Henri Lefebvre. This right is earned through taking part in the daily making of the urban fabric by living in the city, as well as by meeting particular responsibilities which entitle people to participate in decisions that control social and spatial relations (Lefebvre, 1968, 1972; Lefebvre, Kofman, & Lebas, 1996; Mitchell, 2003). The right to the city is not only about the social control of spaces of production, but also about the right to participate in decision-making, to use the city, and to shape it. Because groups assert claims against each other, the city has become the space of contested rights (Lefebvre, 1991; Mitchell, 2003). In return, the emphasis on the concept of “right to the city” has given rise to new coalitions of community groups and NGOs. In the US, a coalition called “Right to the City Alliance”⁵ is articulating multiple claims together: It is animated by economic and environmental justice demands while, at the same time, fighting pressures of real estate speculation, privatization of community space, gentrification, along with rights to land, and demands for greater democracy and human rights (Connolly & Steil, 2009; Marcuse, 2009a; Mitchell, 2003).

In this landscape of new urban claims and recent emergence of demands for improved environmental quality, spatial justice is a framework that can provide an overarching explanation and rallying point for activist struggles. In other words, spatial justice is a broader concept from which other demands for equity, such as “environmental justice”, the “just city”, or the reduction of regional inequalities, are derived (Soja, 2009). In the social science scholarship, space and geography have often been relegated in the background. However, in contrast to traditional views on justice, spatial justice emphasizes the importance of using the lens of geography to understand inequities in cities. It underlines that understanding the claims of marginalized communities requires not only putting light on the relation between socio-economic conditions and racial discrimination, but also on the spatial implications of such a relation.

Spatial justice is the allocation of socially valued resources (i.e. jobs, political power, social status, income, social services, environmental goods) in space, and the opportunities to make use of these resources over time (Marcuse, 2009b; Soja, 2009). A dialectical dynamic is present at the center of spatial injustices: social and human processes shape spatial patterns, as much as spatial patterns shape social processes (Soja, 2009). In short, a mutually formative relation exists between the social and spatial dimension of human life. On the one hand, for instance, social exclusion and poverty often result in rural-urban migration and in the growth of slums on the outskirts of cities such as Rio or Lima. Entire fragile hillsides and slopes are then slowly transformed into favelas. On the other hand, when government agencies sponsor low-quality public housing in vulnerable areas, such housing complexes potentially lead to a concentration of poverty and to disasters in case of extreme weather events. In that sense, spatial injustices are as much a process as an outcome.

⁵ For more information, see <http://www.righttothecity.org/our-history.html>

At the local level, the political organization of the urban space is a particularly powerful source of spatial injustice. Examples range from the redlining of urban investments, the effects of territorial apartheid, purposeful residential segregation, open space planning, service delivery, among others (Fainstein, 2006; Soja, 2009). Spatial injustices are produced and reproduced by relatively stable structures (i.e., states, governments, businesses, etc.), and contained both within physical areas and abstract spaces of socio-economic relations (Dikeç, 2001). They are viewed as constructed on a space that systematically creates domination and oppression. Thus, when analyzing distributional inequities between groups and people, spatial justice theorists argue that inequities are only the consequence of domination practices, and are basically what is left for communities and groups to mobilize around (Merrifield & Swyngedouw, 1997).

These theories of urban development and struggles provide a helpful framework for understanding the broader processes of injustice and exclusion against which marginalized neighborhoods organize. They shed light on the urban socio-economic and political dynamics that distressed neighborhoods confront to address environmental and health injustices. The rise of holistic claims of groups fighting for a just city or a right to the city also suggests that people's demands can be broad and encompassing, and do not only reflect issues of class, race, gender, inequities. Yet, previous research has not examined the relation between community organizing for improved environmental conditions in marginalized neighborhoods and the deeper goal and vision behind their engagement. In fact, beyond mobilizing for environmental justice, activists in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana raise a variety of deeper political claims in the city, which the present study examines in greater depth.

1.2.4 Selection of strategies and tactics

While the understanding of urban residents' claims and motivation is critical for the analysis of community organization towards greater livability, it is also essential to understand the strategies and processes that have enabled distressed neighborhoods to achieve their goals, and how such strategies have been constructed over space and time. In fact, people are not only passive victims but also act purposefully to address perceived or real injustices and make conscious choices to defend their community and achieve their vision.

1.2.4.1 A wide repertoire of contention for movements and organizations

Strategies and tactics traditionally refer to the range of direct action (protest, demonstrations, boycotts, denunciations, shaming, strikes, etc) and institutional means (lobbying, public hearings, campaigns, testimonies, political pressures during elections, etc) that groups and movements use to advance their goals and objectives. Strategies are usually developed by institutions whereas tactics are built by everyday non-producer people (De Certeau, 1984). Strategies manifest themselves physically in concrete sites or in products, and require a considerable investment in space and in time. Their goals are to perpetuate themselves through actions. A strategy is not highly flexible and is not able to break up because it is embedded in centralized spatial or institutional places. On the contrary, tactics can regroup easily and are highly adaptive. Unlike strategies, tactics are not spatially grounded and do not have their own dedicated resources. Tactics try to infiltrate and achieve their goals through inventive activities behind an appearance of being in conformity with existing orders and strategies. In that sense, a tactic is not in true competition with a strategy and does not seek to overtake it. The strength of a

tactic comes from its capacity to deflect a strategy's influence and to make it impossible for entities of power to portray actions as a "mappable" form of subversion (De Certeau, 1984).

A wide diversity of strategic and tactical choices have allowed groups and movements to advance their goals and gain power, especially over state actors. For instance, social movements tend to have greater influence over governmental officials if they choose the right culturally-accepted strategies among an available and malleable repertoire of contention (Tilly 1978, Tarrow 1998). In order to not become controlled by their opponents, activists and movement leaders need to use common collective cultural frames and repertoires while being innovative (Tarrow, 1994). Furthermore, groups that alternate between engagement in direct negotiations with the state and confrontational action (i.e. protests or lawsuits) tend to receive positive responses to their demands (Pellow, 2001; Polletta, 2005; Porta & Rucht, 2002; Tilly, 1978). In other instances, the use of more targeted and smaller objectives, coupled with direct tactics such as sit-ins and strikes, are seen as key determinants for gaining political power (Gamson, 1990).

Institutional policy environments tend to mold and affect the types of engagement that activists adopt vis-à-vis decision-makers. For instance, states with high policy capacity seem to facilitate collective action with movements operating mostly within institutional channels (i.e. Sweden); In contrast, closed systems (i.e. France) lack institutional receptivity for movements to have an impact, and drive movement organizations and leaders to adopt more confrontational strategies which involve less negotiation and dialogue (Kitschelt, 1986). Political systems also tend to have an influence on the initiation, forms, and outcomes of collective action, especially as they evolve through time and modify the environmental of social actors (Tilly, 2001). Collective action -- and a more direct and violent type of collective action -- will arise in contexts where political repression is less likely; otherwise, the costs of direct collective action, such as the suppression of the movement and the imprisonment of some of its leaders -- might be too high for the contenders, and retreat might be preferred (Tilly, 1978).

Political opportunity structures (POS) also tend to impact whether collective action takes place at all. POS traditionally correspond to the context and resources that encourage or discourage collective action (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 1994). They refer to the capacity of social movements to be dynamic and strategically interact and respond to a political environment that is favorable to their action. In that sense, institutional politics can facilitate or constrain political action (Tarrow, 1994). Movements often mount action based on changing circumstances and following a political process perspective, assessing whether a series of factors conflate positively for them, including whether political opportunities are expanding in their favor (McAdam, 1982). Movements consider the opportunities to take action and evaluate their relation with their contenders before they make a decision (Tilly, 1978). Are they in situation of gaining possible power? Will they be repressed or will their action be facilitated? Are there opportunities or rather threats for them to press their demands? At times, multilevel political opportunities exist through, for instance, local movements being helped by international civic or governmental pressures (McAdam, 1998). Complex internationalism can offer resources and opportunities for non state actors to challenge elites and even collaborate with insiders (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005). Here groups take advantage of the political context (Gamson, 1990).

In the environmental arena, movements have resorted to a wide variety of strategies and tactics. When fighting for environmental preservation, movements that have elevated struggles

beyond the local scale and linked their demands to broader national or global campaigns have enhanced their likelihood of achieving their goals (Bandy & Smith, 2005; Porta & Rucht, 2002; Shaw, 2004). A closer look at the strategies used to address environmental injustices reveals that both direct action and institutional strategies have allowed marginalized communities to address environmental and health issues. For instance, direct and confrontational tactics – lawsuits against companies, direct denunciations and shaming, release of information on toxic substances, and pressure for greater government oversight of industrial activities – have proved their effectiveness in addressing environmental contamination (Bandy & Smith, 2005; Bullard, 1990; Diaz, 2005; Green, 1999; Pellow, 2001; Pellow, 2007; Shrader-Frechette, 2002). In such cases, the direct pressure and subsequent costs of not addressing residents' complain force governments and private businesses to respond to the demands of community groups.

In other cases, residents and local groups have used a more collaborative approach: They have successfully pressured companies to engage in multiparty negotiations (Susskind & Macey, 2004), or to participate in voluntary corporate social responsibility schemes (Cashore, 2006; Newell, 2001), such as good neighbor agreements or economic development funds. Such modes of engagement seem to be effective to resolve long-term conflict and promote win-win outcomes as they take into consideration the interests of all parties. For example, consensus-based multiparty dialogues have shown to create joint learning, enable stakeholders to reframe their identity, and build spin-off partnerships and more sustainable agreements (Forester, 1999; Innes, 2004; Susskind, Levy, & Thomas-Larmer, 2000; Susskind & Macey, 2004). In several instances, professional techniques and scientifically proven impacts along with the insights of affected people help “co-produce knowledge” on the adverse health impacts of environmental contamination. In turn, this knowledge have improved the likelihood that public agencies or corporations will respond to residents' demands (Corburn, 2005).

In the space of cities, collective action is generally considered more effective when accompanied by a series of parallel processes, such as community organizing and empowerment, and by internal and external resources. Such resources often include dedicated individuals and cadres who provide technical assistance, political savviness, and grant resources (Medoff & Sklar, 1994; Peterman, 2000; Von Hoffman, 2003). Specific structures such as movement organizations also play a crucial role in bringing activists together. Their responsibility is to construct greater meaning for participants through public discourses, persuasive communication, and consciousness raising, by anchoring a message in some pre-existing belief to be transformed into collective beliefs (Snow & Benford, 1992). When local communities are at the stage of interacting with governmental agencies, a broker organization can help neighborhoods to gain access to greater political power (Jacobs, 1961) by engendering a “creative tension” between the interests of the overall power structure in the city and those of local neighborhood residents (Peterman, 2000). At the ground level, leaders from these organizations play a key role in changing the perceptions that residents have of their neighborhoods, cultivating close relationships with them, and working collaboratively with outside leaders (Von Hoffman, 2003).

This analysis of the range of strategies and tactics raises the question of what factors determine the adoption of repertoires of action by movement organizations and leaders. Some social movement scholars argue that the structure and professionalization of movement organizations and the types of political institutions and funders surrounding movements shape strategic and tactical choices (McAdam, 1982; Staggenborg, 1998; Tarrow, 1998). For instance,

as organizations become more professionalized and formalized, they tend to resort less to confrontational and disruptive tactics (Piven & Cloward, 1977; Staggenborg, 1998). Organizations' personal experience and knowledge (Jasper, 1997; Tarrow, 1998), core values, philosophies, and moral beliefs (DesJardins, 2000; Schein, 1985), and political ideology (Dalton, 1994; Zald, 2000) also influence the behavior of groups and decisions about the most effective and appropriate repertoires. More recently, sense-making and interpretive processes about the institutional environment, the efficacy of certain forms of actions, and the acceptability of tactics have been shown to play strong roles in shaping the strategic choices (Carmin & Balser, 2002).

1.2.4.2 Resourcefulness, non-material resources, and community attachment

As movements and organizations draw upon strategies and tactics, they do not have access to the same access to resources or repertoires of contention. In the case of seemingly powerless or younger groups on the political arena, their display of greater resourcefulness and strategic capacity – access to salient information, heuristic facility, and motivation – has helped them achieve a greater impact on their target. Such resourcefulness allows them to generate effective strategies and compensate for a lack of resources (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Ganz, 2000; Tarrow, 1994). For instance, through the construction of wider coalitions between groups and beyond classes, groups can put greater pressure on state actors (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Foweraker, 2001; Gould, Lewis, & Roberts, 2004; Green, 1999; Polletta, 2005; Tarrow, 1994), especially if they use appropriate issue framing to draw support (Humphreys, 2008; Pellow, 2001). At times, coalition building might be difficult if groups have different cultural frames and symbolic valuation of certain tactics and working styles (Polletta, 2005). In recent years, transnational advocacy networks have been quite effective in supporting coalitions: Transnational structures allow coalitions to develop global claims and work through dense and flexible horizontal patterns of communication and exchange (Bandy & Smith, 2005; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Pellow, 2007; Porta & Rucht, 2002; Rodrigues, 2004; Shaw, 2004).

Using the lens of social and cultural psychology, movements' success can depend on the non-material resources or tools that become available to movement leaders. For instance, shared cognition, meanings, motivations, and attachment do at times feed on each other and facilitate the lasting participation of people in cohesive movements that have strong identity, solidarity, and consciousness (Snow & Benford, 1992). In addition, feelings and emotions such as anger, indignation, fear, disgust, joy, excitement, and love create a bond for action and encourage participants to join a movement (Gamson, 1992; Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001; Jasper, 1997). In some cases, movement leaders use sentimental imaginary and nostalgia, as framing techniques to reveal latent collective identity or build new identities and eventually achieve political clout (Hunt, Benford, & Snow, 1994). Here, both individual and collective dimensions can explain mobilization for action.

In urban neighborhoods, shared beliefs and social control help build a community's capability to achieve a specific effect, coupled with an active sense of residents' engagement. In many instances, both local organizations and voluntary associations help foster "collective efficacy" – the link between social cohesion and shared expectations for action, – often through strategic networking (Sampson, 2004). Inner-community social capital is also a helpful asset for fostering the participation of community members in collective action (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001). Social capital is the extent and effectiveness of formal and

informal human network, coupled with the impact of social ties on communities (Lin, 2001). It is a collective asset and a feature of communities, and can be used to leverage investments in human capital and household financial structures as poor people tend to rely on extended family ties and more formal organizations to survive (Saegert et al., 2001).

Social capital has importance for the preservation of values and conditions related to place and the built environment, and can operate in formal and informal neighborhood networks (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Residents in neighborhoods can rally together based on the value they assign to their place and based on their interactions, and they organize others to defend the nature of their community (Flora & Flora, 2006). Eventually, the engagement of people through their participation in the stable institutions of community life, such as churches, has been shown to increase their political power. If used effectively, social capital can generate effective and visible power in the political arena, -- and this through patient relationship building at the local level along with concrete local improvements, and through the use of value-based commitment to family and community, and at times, to social justice and racial inclusiveness (Warren, 2001).

Community identity can also be used in addition to social capital, and manipulated as an active political strategy by coalitions who mobilize residents to contest urban policies. It is deployed strategically as a type of collective action to empower neighborhood residents and bring them together (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002). A sense of place can be a non-material resource called upon by residents as they struggle with the degradation of their place and against feelings of alienation. For instance, in some American cities, the shared experience of racial segregation and the importance of preserving the “community” created the basis of highway opponents claims, with leaders arguing that Black neighborhoods had a political right to be exempted from highway construction. Eventually, movement organizations using community identity as a way to create strategies enhance the power of movement framing (Gotham, 1999). In that sense, collective identity is not only a condition for mobilization, but is also produced and reproduced through the course of social movement actions. That said, identity should actually be seen through a more dialectic and dynamic lens. Sense of community and place can be reshaped and reconstructed through local mobilization and interactions with decision-makers and planners.

In sum, social scientists have conducted research on dynamics of contention at the national and sub-national levels and on the context, motives, and strategies behind collective action. Most social movement studies have focused on the demands of broad movements and their relation with national state actors, rather than on the spatial and social territory of neighborhoods as the base for collective action, and on large structures (i.e., neighborhood organizations, environmental NGOs, civil rights groups, etc) (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002), as facilitators of collective action. However, not all mobilizations can be thought of in terms of social movements, and attention should not only be dedicated to large mobilizations and to protests against specific threats. In other words, our understanding of the development of strategies made by individuals and groups, especially in the context of proactive fights for environmental quality in urban neighborhoods and of the factors behind strategic choices is limited. How and why do people adopt certain strategies – and not others?

To date, comparative analyses, particularly cross-national comparisons of local mobilizations remain scarce, although opportunities are plentiful to observe movements and

groups with similar objectives or forms of mobilization in different settings. More research is needed to analyze strategy development by urban groups fighting for environmental improvements in democracies versus autocratic regimes and to understand how repertoires of action and interactions with decision-makers are affected by the sense of space of neighborhoods and their interpretation of the outside context. Last, our understanding of the use of emotional connections to place is still limited at the urban neighborhood level. A more nuanced and place-based analysis is needed to understand the relations between individual territorial attachment, neighborhood collective identities, and the development of strategies to improve environmental and health benefits in urban neighborhoods.

Analyzing cases in point of historically marginalized communities fighting for a holistic equitable environmental revitalization of their place is the goal of this study. As I explore a new nexus – between environmental justice, community development, and place-attachment, – I examine the deeper meanings and objectives that guide community of color and low-income communities. I also analyze how they achieve their goals and become successful in the development of their environmental revitalization projects.

1.3 Introduction to case sites

1.3.1 Case Selection

This research is based on an international comparative study of three critical and emblematic minority and low-income neighborhoods organizing for improved environmental quality and livability: Casc Antic (Barcelona), Dudley (Boston), Cayo Hueso (Havana). By using the case method, I have been able to engage in an in-depth and holistic comparison between neighborhoods and develop causal explanations for community organization around environmental and livability issues, as well as for the activists' selection of strategies and tactics (Yin, 2003). Since case studies are designed to bring out complex details from the point of view of participants by using multiple data sources (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991), they also provide the possibility to look for patterns, and relationships among factors, actors, and events across cases. Last, they offer opportunities for developing a comprehensive understanding of cultural systems of action, that is sets of interrelated activities engaged in by the actors in a social situation (Feagin et al., 1991).

I selected these specific case of neighborhoods in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana in order to analyze neighborhoods which have all successfully managed to gain greater voice in the city, assert their claims to planners and policy-makers, and achieve comparable improved environmental and health conditions. While doing preliminary fieldwork in each city and assembling academic articles, reports, and newspaper resources about them, I found that Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso were critical and emblematic cases of community organization, action, and achievement around improvement in environmental conditions. I carefully considered other neighborhoods in each city (i.e., Atarés and Pogolotti in Havana, Dorchester, East Boston, and Mattapan in Boston, and the Barceloneta, Raval, and Nou Barris in Barcelona), but realized, after discussing such options with community activists and planners, that they were not representative of the long-lasting changes, comprehensive neighborhood improvements, and dynamics of community engagement around environmental revitalization which I was interested in studying. I also purposefully chose neighborhoods in the center of each city to account for the

role of proximity to decision-makers and of historical development in the discourses, claims, and strategies of residents, which also led me to my choices of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso.

I am specifically focusing my study on projects and initiatives around parks and playgrounds, sports courts and centers, urban farms, farmers' markets and healthy food providers, waste management, and healthy housing. Each neighborhood has been very active and visible in each city over the past two to three decades in mobilizing residents and supporters towards improved environmental quality and livability. Improved environmental conditions are common to the three neighborhoods included in this study, with some marginal variation depending on each particular local context to allow for the more spontaneous neighborhood self-identification of improvements in environmental and health conditions. These three neighborhoods are situated in the center area of Barcelona, Boston, and Havana to ensure that they are comparable to each other in terms of geographic location within the city, physical proximity to decision-makers, planners, and economic players, general infrastructure in comparison with other areas of the city, and historic relevance in each place.

At first glance, one can ask why a city such as Havana is part of this selection of cases, knowing that it is part of a socialist, centralized, and autocratic regime. I selected these cases as part of an inductive approach to research. I was first struck by similarities in discourses and tactics as I first met residents and leaders in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana. I soon after became aware that a comparative analysis of their mobilization over time would be quite compelling, and this because residents took similar action and seem to show similar commitment to their neighborhood in a variety of political systems and contexts of urbanization. I was thus committed to maximizing the diversity of political systems, contexts of urbanization, and histories of marginalization to test how these different conditions affect the claims, struggles, and strategies of historically distressed neighborhoods.

There are different ways to define political systems and regimes. For the purpose of this study, I classify systems according to the level of political rights and citizens' participation, protection of civil liberties, and presence of guaranteed democratic elections (Tilly, 2006). In that sense, Boston represents a well-established democracy with historic roots of civic engagement and high protection of liberties and regular elections at multiple levels. Barcelona constitutes a case of a young democracy re-established in 1977 after half a century of dictatorship with growing level of citizen's participation and civil liberties. Havana is an example of an autocratic and centralized government with weak opportunities for citizens' engagement into decision-making, low respect of civil liberties, and non-open elections at the national level.

The contexts of urbanization vary greatly between these three cities: Boston is a wealthy, well-developed, and established city with strong neighborhoods that make up its social and economic fabric, but with a long history of segregation, racial violence, and marginalization of immigrant and poor areas. Barcelona has been a dynamic and quite rich city, but it received little investment and attention under Franco's dictatorship, and was "up for grabs" upon the return of democracy – with large (re)development projects, new infrastructure across the city, and strong contestation movements. Over the past decades, the city has welcomed waves of migrants from Andalucia and Galicia and immigrants from Latin America and North Africa who have integrated into the fabric of the city despite initial clashes and tensions with older residents. Last, Havana is part of a developing country, which has suffered a deep economic and social crisis

after the fall of communism in 1989. In addition, Cuba has few resources and crumbling infrastructure. Since Castro's victory in 1959, the socialist revolution has attempted to eradicate racism and discrimination against Afro-Cubans and to provide them with high quality education, health, and housing in Havana. Figure 1 below summarizes the selection of case studies.

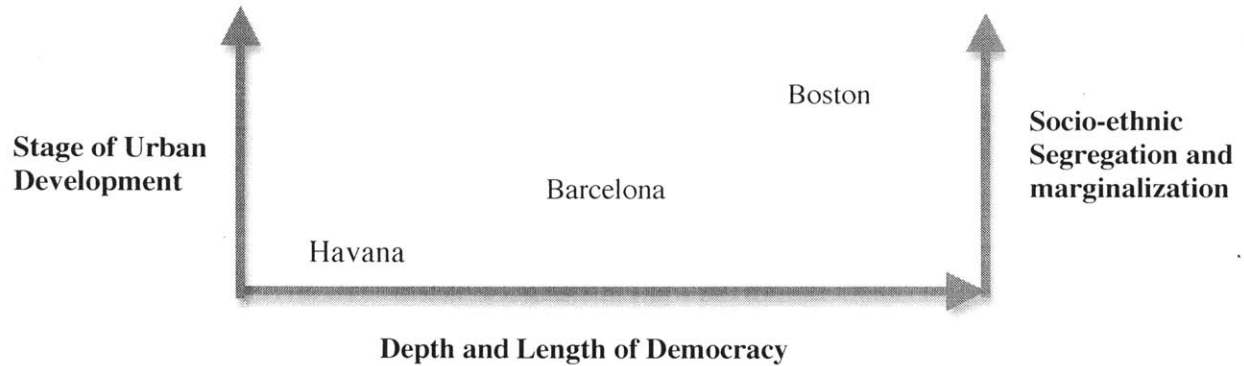


Figure 1: City Selection

1.3.2 A brief overview of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso

Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso are three centrally-located distressed neighborhoods of Boston, Barcelona, and Havana. Their baseline conditions and transformation are briefly summarized in Table 1 below.

Dudley	Casc Antic	Cayo Hueso
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Neighborhood with majority of low-income African-American, Cape Verdean, and Latino residents •1,300 vacant lots by the mid-80s •Illegal trash transfer stations •Lack of parks and recreational facilities •Food deserts •50% of children below poverty line •Since 1984, community-led land management and (re)development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •31% of residents as foreigners, and majority of them in poverty •Legacy of Franco: Crumbling housing, poor waste management, and abandoned and unsafe public spaces •1980s: Unequal developments with the PERIS urban plans with acute social and environmental impacts •Urban conflicts since the end of 1990s (i.e. Forat de la Vergonya) •1990s-2000s: Community-based environmental revitalization projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Predominantly Afro-Cuban neighborhood in Centro Habana •By 1989: Degradation of buildings and sanitation •More than 50% of residents without daily access to potable water •Few green areas and safe public spaces •Further degradation during the Special Period •1990s-2000s: Workshops for the Integral Transformation of the Neighborhood and independent resident projects

Table 1: Summary characteristics of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso

In Boston, Dudley is a neighborhood situated in the broader district of Roxbury, with a majority of low-income African-American, Cape Verdean, and Latino residents and located less than two miles from downtown. It is named after the street that runs from Dudley Station on Washington Street to Uphams' corner in North Dorchester. In the 1980s, Dudley had a staggering amount of vacant land (21% or 1,300 parcels). Illegal trash transfers were city neglect and arson by mostly white and affluent property owners eager to leave the inner-city (Layzer, 2006). In 1990, one out of two Dudley children lived below the poverty line and was malnourished, and the neighborhood also had a disproportionate level of homicide deaths, with 31 people killed by homicide in the Dudley core area between 1987 and 1991 – out of 481 for Boston (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). In sum, over the years, marginalization, poverty, stereotypes, and prejudice had limited the life expectancies and opportunities of Dudley's children and youth.

However, since the end of the 1980s, Dudley residents and organizations have organized to protest against illegal dumping and abandonment through the campaign "don't dump on us", which led to the creation of a shared vision of "development without displacement" and sustainable and safe "urban village". This shared vision first emerged from a community-wide process conducted initially in 1987 that resulted in a resident-developed, comprehensive revitalization plan, which was then updated several times. The neighborhood also took control over 1,300 parcels of abandoned land after being granted the power of eminent domain over much of the vacant land by the City of Boston (Layzer, 2006). Today, many lots have been transformed permanently into parks, playgrounds, urban farms and gardens, and other community spaces, as an effort to revitalize Dudley and allow residents to live in better environmental and health conditions.



Figure 2: Aerial View of Dudley’s central area (Source: Google Maps)

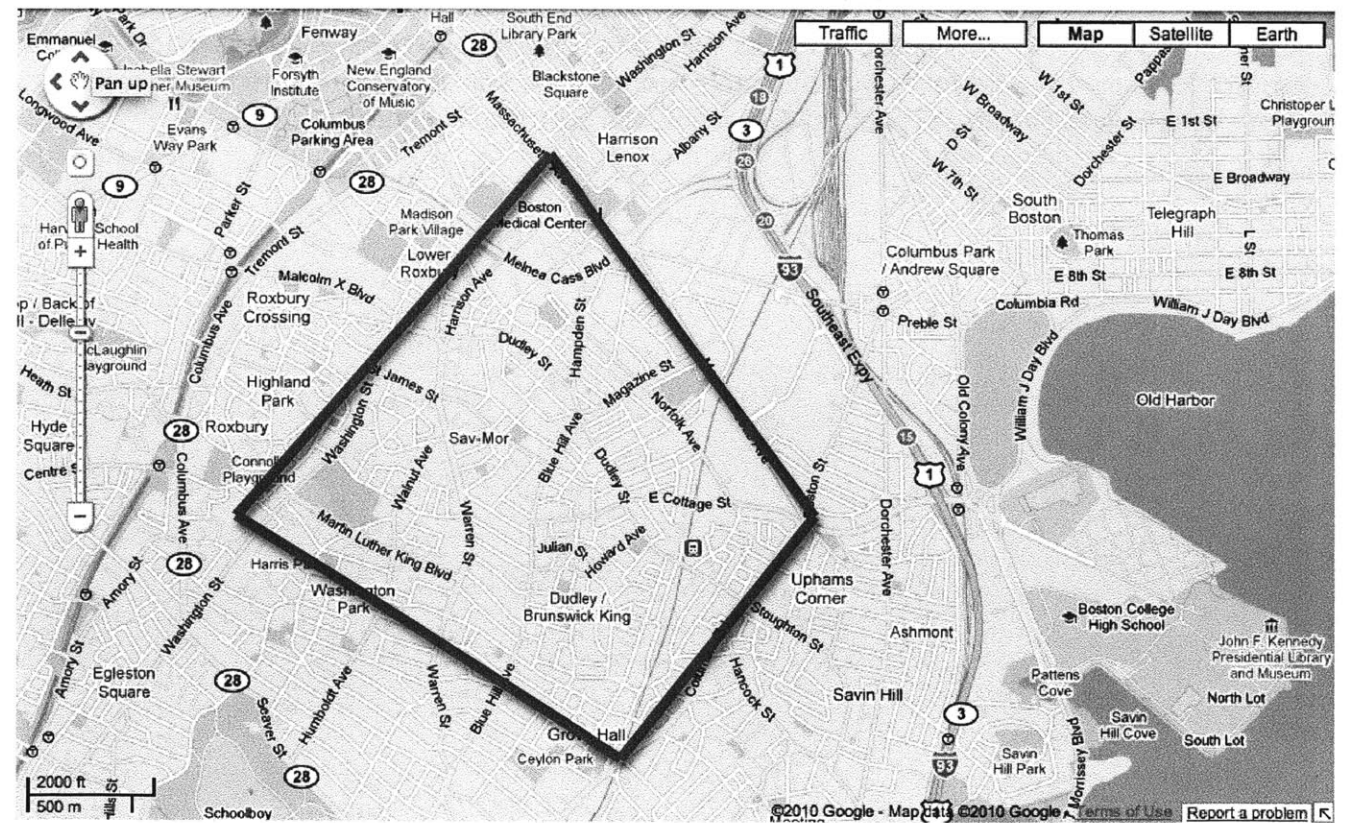


Figure 3: Boundaries of Dudley in Boston (Source: Google Maps)

In Barcelona, Ciutat Vella, the district where Casc Antic is located, takes the form of a labyrinth of small streets and plazas, with only a few streets measuring more than seven meters in width. Small stores or workshops usually occupy the ground floor of buildings while the upper floors are used for housing or, at times, office spaces. The names of the streets –Cotoners (cotton makers), Flassaders (blanket makers), – still reflect the traditional small-scale sale and artisan businesses of the neighborhood. Located between Barcelona’s waterfront and the broader and airy checkered streets of the newer Eixample district, Casc Antic is a lively, diverse, very dense neighborhood full of contrasts and colors. The Casc Antic neighborhood, located in the oldest district of the city, Ciutat Vella, has traditionally been a neighborhood welcoming waves of national and international migrants. Today, thirty-one percent of the population of the Casc Antic are foreigners, many of them illegal immigrants without regular income, and the majority of the residents live in poverty.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the legacy of Franco’s dictatorship in the area consisted of crumbling housing units, poor waste management, and abandoned and unsafe public spaces. In 1983 (and throughout the 1990s), the newly democratic Municipality of Barcelona put in place Special Plans for Internal Reforms (PERIs) to revitalize degraded areas of the old town and promote tourism attractions while improving infrastructures and decrease crime and prostitution (Monnet, 2002). However, since the mid-1990s, disagreements have been recurrent between authorities and residents in the Casc Antic who have raised their voice against what they believe demonstrates city-sponsored real estate speculation, harassment against the population, and neighborhood gentrification with the brutal displacement of foreign and poor inhabitants and degradation of many areas of the neighborhood. In the 2000s, several conflicts – especially around the Forat de La Vergonya – have illustrated how residents and organizations in the Casc Antic have been fighting for improving environmental and health conditions and beautifying community spaces for all residents. Over the years, the Forat has become a contested space and territory conquered and defended by neighbors, community organizations, and activists, as well as an example of self-managed parks, playgrounds, and community gardens.



Figure 4: Aerial View of the Casc Antic (Source: Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella)

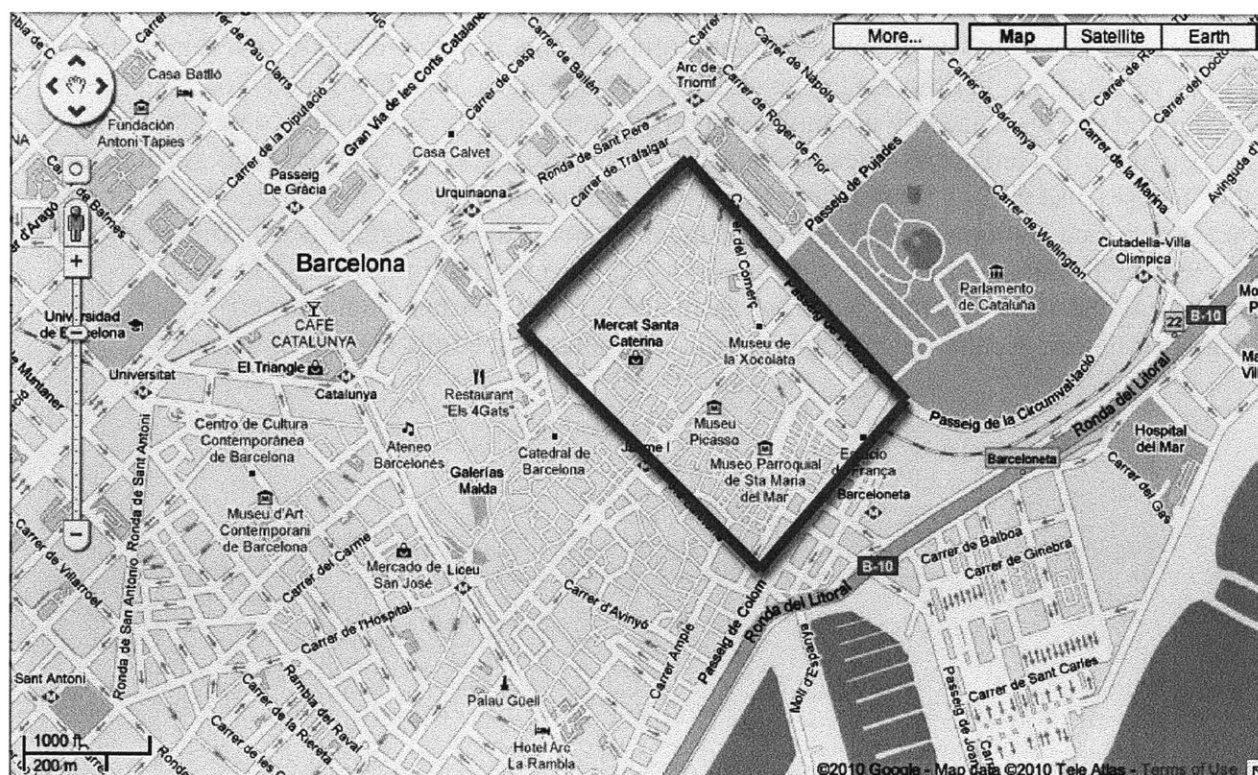


Figure 5: Boundaries of the Casc Antic in Barcelona (Source: Google Maps)

Located in the municipality of Centro Habana, the Popular Council of Cayo Hueso is one of Havana's oldest, most vibrant, diverse, and fascinating neighborhoods. It is a predominantly Afro-Cuban neighborhood in the center of the city. Centro Habana has the highest density of the whole country with 170,000 inhabitants squeezed in a tight square of 3,5 km². Cayo Hueso itself, has a population of approximately 40,000 residents living in 0.83 km² (Spiegel et al., 2001). From the sky, Centro Habana appears like a maze of interconnected streets, passages, and courtyards facing the beautiful Bay of Havana; and from the ground, the activities, games, parties, music, and festivities taking place on the streets and inside the buildings give the impressions of mini-neighborhoods within the neighborhood. Its architecture is extremely diverse – from neo-gothic in religious buildings, neoclassic in old palaces and offices, to Art Déco in apartments, Art Nouveau in some houses, and also more contemporary architecture (Gómez & Nieda, 2005). In Cayo Hueso, streets are as much as a passageway as daily places of encounter and activity for residents, and the distinction of private and public space in and outside the buildings is very loose.

Until the end of the 1980s, the vast majority of buildings in Cayo Hueso were highly degraded and abandoned by the authorities, and, by the 1990s, more than half of the residents were still lacking daily access to potable water. Moreover, the water disposal system was deficient and partially broken, and liquid and solid waste was only collected in the commercial area of the neighborhood. Since the beginning of the economic crisis in 1989, drug dealing, domestic violence, and prostitution had become symbols of the neighborhood's degradation and neglect (Yassi et al., 2003). However, this so-called "Special Period" in Cuba also gave rise to the mobilization and participation of Cayo Hueso residents in neighborhood revitalization projects through the Talleres Integrales de Renovación del Barrio. Those "talleres" are workshops for integrated neighborhood transformation, which were created in several marginal and impoverished neighborhoods in Havana. They represent an alternative model of decentralized and participatory urban development, promoting the reappraisal of neighborhoods as clearly identified territories (Hearn, 2008). Over the years, Cayo Hueso residents participating in the "talleres," as well as more independent local community leaders, have been able to bring concrete and long lasting environmental and health benefits to the neighborhood. Their projects span the rehabilitation and construction of parks and playgrounds, improved solid waste management and street cleaning, an urban farm and farmers' market, public art projects in place of degraded buildings, and the integration of at-risk youth and adults in their initiatives.



Figure 6: Aerial View of Cayo Hueso (Source: CUJAE – Havana)

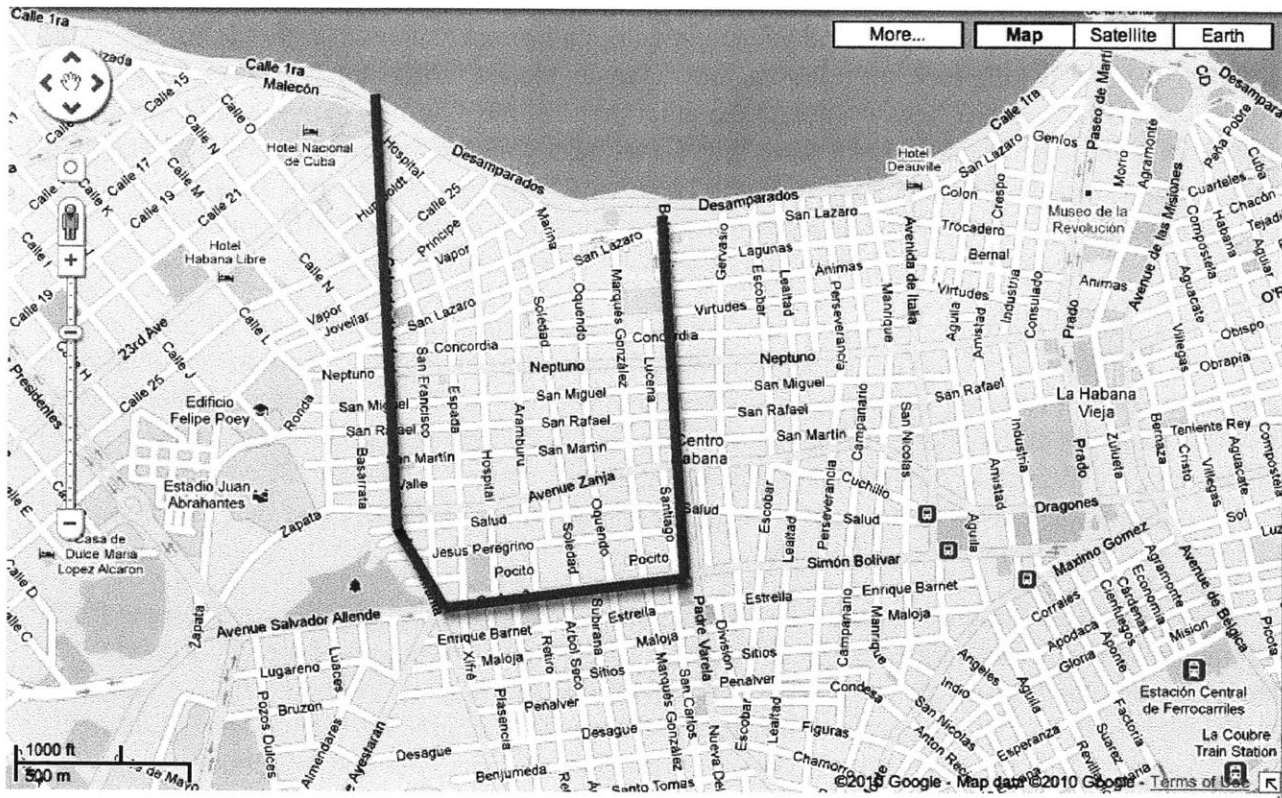


Figure 7: Boundaries of Cayo Hueso in Havana (Source: Google Maps)

1.3.3 Data collection and analysis

1.3.3.1 Data Collection

The data collection for this study is based on seven months of fieldwork in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, and on a variety of sources. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 45 participants in Barcelona, 49 participants in Havana, and 50 participants in Boston, and interviewed some participants several times. In addition, I frequently had informal conversations with these interviewees and other important actors in each neighborhood. I also engaged in observation and participant observation, and collected secondary data in each of the studies. These multiple sources of evidence allowed me to ensure construct validity, provide causal explanations, and achieve adequate triangulation (Feagin et al., 1991; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

- Interviews

During my field research, I carried out semi-structured interviews and unstructured with leaders of community-based organizations, neighborhood organizations, and local NGOs working on improving local environmental conditions in each city. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with a sample of active residents and leaders in each neighborhood. I developed interview questions specifically meant to help me understand the process and contexts that initially led to their decision of participating and mobilize in their neighborhood. I also asked them questions about how they view the space they defend, the identity they have developed around it, what are the broader meanings of their engagement, and how they managed to defend their vision for the neighborhood and achieve greater environmental and health quality. In addition, I identified the types of relations they have developed with planners and officials, the strategies and tactics they have used, and the alliances they have built to gain greater recognition and support for their projects. Last, these interviews helped me understand the broader context of urbanization in each city, the historic role that residential segregation and urban planning have played in environmental quality, and how these historical conditions have influenced neighborhood organization, planning, and mobilization around environmental justice issues.

I also conducted a few semi-structured and many unstructured interviews with residents, workers, and professionals (i.e., representatives of business associations, members of social or cultural associations and groups, social workers, and political activists) of each neighborhood, but who were not active in the revitalization work I focus on here. My goal was to better understand the different types of stakeholders and groups present in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic and have a better sense of their own perspective and experience of neighborhood changes and environmental revitalization.

In addition, I conducted semi-structured interviews with officials and professionals from municipal agencies and offices (i.e., the Planning Office, the Department of Neighborhood Development, the Environmental Department, and the Department of Public Health), whose work, support or lack of support, and opinions influenced the organization and mobilization of marginalized urban neighborhoods. I also interviewed representatives from media organizations and intellectuals. Through those interviews, I attempted to understand the nature of the broader political environment in which neighborhoods have organized their actions, and which official plans and vision local residents have responded to. My questions also explored which forums

and spaces of participation decision-makers and planners created to include community voices in municipal decisions. I examined to what extent officials and professionals attempted to include the neighborhoods' demands in the planning of local (re)developments or improvements, and how and to what extent they eventually agreed to listen to the local residents and organizations' demands. I also teased out through my questions if they were (and how they became) allies and supporters, in some cases, of neighborhood leaders, workers, and active residents. Last, I interviewed international or national NGOs and funders which were not based in the neighborhood, but whose support to Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso appeared to have been decisive in the pursuit of environmental and health projects.

I used snowball sampling to select appropriate interviewees and I recorded interviewees upon their permission. In instances where I did not record participants, I wrote extensive notes during the interviews. When selecting participants within each neighborhood, I attempted to take into account the fact that several core identities and projects might co-exist, compete, or support each other in each neighborhood, which I assessed through my interviews with a variety of organizations, local civil society leaders, and residents. Upon getting a better sense of those identities and projects, I decided how many interviews I needed to conduct (and with which type of resident or leader) to understand how those different identities and projects have worked themselves to create the process of collective organization and to reclaim degraded spaces. I considered the fact that different types of leaders exist in each neighborhood – unofficial moral or religious leaders, officially elected leaders or leaders occupying important official positions, and members or staff of local organizations – and interviewed all of them whenever possible.

- Observation and participation observation

In parallel, I engaged in observation of meetings and events, as well as participant observation of projects focused on environmental and health improvements, in order to better understand the goals and visions of leaders and residents, the development of their work and engagement, as well as the hurdles they encounter to address to achieve their goals. More generally I was interested in understanding the more general spirit and context in which their projects are taking place, as well as the dynamics between participants.

In Barcelona I spent many hours at different times of the day observing activities and events occurring at the Forat de la Vergonya, the main area that residents and their supporters entirely rebuilt into parks, playground, community centers, and urban gardens. I paid particular attention to the development of activities, the dynamics between people, the atmosphere of the place, and had at times informal exchanges with people in these different places. I also went to some organized events and meetings to celebrate the neighborhood, organize a new environmental activity, defend the neighborhood against a specific threat, and promote exchange of experiences between neighborhoods fighting for similar purposes. In Boston, I engaged in similar types of observations, and also spent extensive time observing different new spaces created around Dudley – parks, sports grounds, farmers' markets, kids playgrounds, healthy cafés, and plazas. I also attended several public events and political rallies to better understand the types of issues residents were working on or were concerned about in the neighborhood. Last, I spent lots of time walking or riding my bike around the neighborhood to get a general sense of its patterns, composition, and lay-out. In Havana, in addition to following similar types of protocols and focuses for my observations, I also observed several cultural and artistic events

around Afro-Cuban religion since cultural manifestations are so much part of the daily life of residents in Cuba. They are also a natural and non-controversial art of meeting and discussing issues, and a domain through which residents have rallied to bring in concrete environmental improvements to the neighborhood.

In terms of participant observation, I volunteered every week during my field research at a community organization in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I became aware, by talking to some residents and connections I had in each place, that volunteering and giving back a bit of my time to the neighborhood was an essential way as a researcher to become more accepted in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso. Volunteering helped me to not be viewed as a researcher engaged in an extractive research enterprise in minority neighborhoods, knowing that residents openly expressed that they had often been victim of extraction practices in the past. Volunteering made me become more comfortable with myself and with others. Such regular engagement also allowed me to be introduced to important actors in the neighborhood, become aware of projects and activities, and understand more in depth the work of activists or organizers. In Boston, I volunteered at the Food Project – an urban farm in Dudley –, at ACE – an environmental justice organization –, and at DSNI – a community redevelopment organization. In Barcelona, I dedicated time to a local community center and urban garden, and, in Havana, I volunteered at the Casa del Nino y de la Nina, a community center and recreational area for youth in Cayo Hueso.

- Secondary data collection

Last, I collected data from a variety of secondary sources in each city. My goal was to identify official, media and other publicly influential perspectives for each neighborhood and to better understand the ideal vision for the city and the neighborhood as formulated by city officials, municipal departments, and local media resources. I also looked for city maps, urban plans, local government legislation, and newspaper editorials and feature articles on the redevelopment of each neighborhood and local community struggles. Finally, I collected publications, reports, and records produced by organizations working on environmental and health issues in each neighborhood to understand the origin and evolution of their work, as well as the strategies and visions they have developed over time and framed to the city.

1.3.3.2 Data analysis

The core of my data analysis was based on the interviews I conducted in each city with activists in each neighborhood (active residents, leaders, community workers), their supporters (foundations, NGOs), as well as public officials and municipal staff members. This wide range of interviews together with my observations and participant observation and supplemented by secondary documents provided very rich empirical data for the analysis of environmental revitalization in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Havana.

During each interview, observation, and participant observation I wrote extensive non-selective notes reflecting the respondents' accounts and used those notes to develop analytical short memos after each day in the field. Those short memos summarized the context of the interview and my first impression from the data, organized the written notes I took into themes, and helped me process some of the data. As I was conducting my fieldwork, I regularly wrote longer analytical memos to reflect some patterns encountered in the data as related to my core

research questions. In addition, I built initial models showing relationships between themes and showing relationships between interviews' visions, objectives, and strategies around environmental justice projects. Around seventy-five percent of my interviews were fully transcribed, and for the remaining twenty-five percent of the interviews, I only transcribed the extensive notes. I fully transcribed all the interviews that seemed essential to my study and chose to only partially transcribe interviews which only provided a more general context for the research or the ones in which the respondent was rather parsimonious on his or her accounts.

At the end of my fieldwork, I engaged in a more thorough and systematic data analysis. I analyzed interviews with key local leaders, neighborhood residents, and community workers - whose active engagement has had a great impact on the neighborhood's access to environmental and health projects, - as well as interviews with planners and decision-makers, and documents produced by organizations, press articles, and reports - using grounded theory techniques. Grounded theory consists in coding text systematically in order to avoid the application of only pre-defined concepts upon the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This work involved completing two layers of line-by-line and paragraph coding - fragmenting, sorting, and separating the entire textual data systematically into categories. In a second stage of focused and axial coding, I used the most significant and frequent codes to synthesize, integrate, and organize my data into theoretical concepts. I related categories to sub-categories and reassembled the data I had fractured during line by line and paragraph coding to bring more coherence to the emerging analysis. I did two rounds of coding for each interview to ensure that I was thoroughly recording concepts and integrated excerpts of interviews that reflected codes I created at a later stage. Upon the completion of this coding, I focused my attention on writing memos and theorizing about the relations between concepts. Here, I attempted to link the theoretical patterns I unraveled around a central category which knitted everything together (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I also constantly compared the interviews together and looked for similarities and differences between respondents. These memos then helped me generate models that showed the mechanics and relationships in my findings and allowed me to visualize emergent theories (for an example of this coding and analysis work, see Appendix 4).

During data coding, I developed codes - among others, - around notions of marginality, domination, justice, social cohesion, participation, contestation, identity, attachment, space, coalitions, and networks, which reflected my initial theoretical assumptions and preliminary findings. However, I also made sure that my coding technique allowed for the emergence of unexpected concepts, which turned out to be notions such as "self-management of public space," "sense of responsibility towards neighborhood," "protection of patrimony," "defense of existing social fabric," "nostalgia," "emotional fulfillment", "war zone," "safe havens," "nurturing," "bricolage," "quick wins" etc. This grounded theory helped me build stories of local leaders, understand their individual and collective identities, as unravel their engagement in the neighborhood and their vision for its revitalization. Last, it allowed me to look more in depth at the narratives and strategies leaders have developed over time to organize residents and gather support, as well as the type of support (or lack of support) and engagement from outside organizations, planners, municipal staff, and policy-makers.

In parallel, I used process tracing techniques for the analysis of interviews with local leaders, active residents, nonprofit organizations, and policy-makers and planners, as well as for the analysis of original documents and notes from observations and participant observations.

Process-tracing involves the evaluation of evidence about the causal mechanisms that link causal variables to outcome variable, searching for the ways through which causal variables are related to the outcome variable (Brady & Collier, 2004; George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2007). It allows for the understanding of complex causal relationships such as those exemplified by multiple causality, feedback loops, or complex interaction effects. If it directed me to trace processes in a very specific and theoretically informed manner as I carefully worked to map the process, exploring the extent to which it coincided with prior, theoretically derived expectations about the workings of the mechanisms, I also focused on specific decision-making dynamics. Eventually, I was able to formulate new mini-theories on the causal mechanisms that connected correlated phenomena in my research (Checkel, 2005). Last, process-tracing helped me reveal how endogenous changes affect the evolution of my variables of interests (Hall, 2003). What was particularly important in my analysis was the explanation of decision processes by which initial conditions and situations of marginalization and neighborhood degradation became translated into outcomes and were mediated by different stimuli (inside or outside the person's environment or institutional arrangement) (George & McKeown, 1985).

To ensure that my process tracing was exhaustive, as I coded my data, I developed codes and processes specifically centered on capturing and piecing together the elements needed to answer my research questions. Through process tracing, I analyzed how community engagement is built upon residents' and organizations' attachment to a neighborhood, their collective identity, broader urban dynamics, and their sense of marginalization and power in the city. I also specifically focused on the development and refinement of strategies and tactics over time, on the factors and external actors impacting (positively or negatively) different choices, and influencing stages of strategy development. This analysis explained how the marginalization and fragmentation of environmental spaces in each city, people's sense of place, and the local social and political contexts affected the engagement, demands, and strategies of marginalized communities, perhaps independently from their individual nature.

Last, I used a combination of two techniques: Analytic and historical narratives. Analytic narratives seek to account for "outcomes by identifying and exploring the mechanisms that generate them" (Bates, 1998), p 12, based on the "actors' preferences, their perceptions, their evaluation of alternatives, the information they possess, the expectations they form, the strategies they adopt, and the constraints that limit their actions" (Bates, 1998), p 11. Historical narratives provide support to this approach by recognizing the importance of feedback loops in decision-making and of historical changes and events that reshape the preferences of actors and make previously available repertoires no longer available (Büthe, 2002). Here, time itself becomes an element that will be part of the causal explanation. Historical narratives are useful for contextualizing the different steps of the process rather than leaving them fragmented into analytical stages (Checkel, 2005).

I found this historic-analytic narrative technique particularly relevant to better understand the role of urban development projects, local histories of marginalization, and political opportunities in motivating activists in their fights for greater environmental goods and livability and in understanding the rationale behind strategic repertoires of action. This technique also allowed me to assess the importance of institutional changes in the local organizations rallying behind the residents' demand in facilitating (or disabling) residents' work and achieving success in improved environmental conditions for each neighborhood. Here as well, during the coding

phase of my data analysis, I built some categories specifically focused around these elements and later assembled them into dynamic processes, histories, and explanations.

1.3.3.3 Voice, power, and sense-making

My research questions, design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques reflect a deeper epistemological preoccupation and scholarly concern for bringing out and emphasizing the voices of active residents, workers, and leaders of traditionally distressed urban neighborhoods, together with their supporters – individuals and groups who are not traditionally the focus and center of attention of planning practice and scholarship. My study and its rendering in this manuscript are based on a choice of who and what categories of people I decided to study. This dissertation brings out their experiences and the interpretation they shared of their life and engagement in local environmental revitalization – and this without negating that other interests and forms of engagement exist in these neighborhoods. This research is meant to reflect the world that these residents and their supporters occupy, their sense-making of their experience in the city, the way they reflect on the decay and historic exclusion, and the strategies they used to confront such processes through environmental revitalization endeavors.

The leaders, workers, activists, and supporters I focus on are not the majority of residents in each neighborhood or in the city, but they are often the unheard while most active groups in regards to planning action and scholarly studies. Since this research is qualitative, interviewees are not meant to be part of a representative sample of a neighborhood either. That said, they are representative of the active participants and leaders of neighborhood struggles and action. It is thus a conscious decision of mine to underline their fights and their interpretation of their work in order to not de-value these usually-absent voices. I also want to avoid reproducing the form of power dynamic with which marginalized neighborhoods already have to function. It is not because those interviewees are not the majority of the residents in a place that their voices are not valid or should be diminished. Neighborhood activists are also working within an unbalanced power structure, which my study is also hoping to address. It is particularly important to emphasize their interpretation and their experience of their neighborhood because it also explains their long term and continued engagement to improve the place, and their desire to continue working for it over time.

That said, my interest in better understanding how active residents, leaders, and community workers achieved a broad neighborhood transformation and success in their environmental endeavor requires to account for the types of outside or inside forces, actors, or threats that activists have had to work with or against which they had to push back or negotiate. I was also committed to understanding the strategies and tactics that activists developed over time, and the role and involvement of internal and external supporters rallying around them to support their goals. I am thus anchoring this study not only on the neighborhood residents, leaders, and workers themselves, but I also account for the nonprofit organizations, foundations, and municipal agencies that had an impact on and a stake in their work. Such interests are reflected in the different research questions I built and the dissertation structure I elaborated, as explained in greater detail below.

1.4 Dissertation structure

The next chapter is a foundation chapter as it introduces the baseline conditions of historical marginalization and environmental degradation with which activists in the three marginalized neighborhoods in Havana, Barcelona, and Boston faced. It also examines their struggles over time in regards to greater livability and environmental quality. It is structured around the history of each neighborhood, how the neighborhoods have changed, and the concrete environmental and health gains residents achieved through a wide variety of environmental and health projects. Here, I draw primarily on secondary sources as well as interviews with active leaders, residents, community workers, NGOs, foundations, planners, and decision-makers to show the neighborhood transformation over twenty to thirty years. This chapter lays the ground for building causal explanations in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 3, 4, and 5 are organized around core answers to each of my three core research questions: In what ways do residents and organizations engaged in environmental quality initiatives perceive that their work allowed them to re-build their community from within (Chapter 3)? To what extent do the environmental struggles of marginalized communities represent a desire to achieve environmental gains as opposed to serving as a means to advance broader political agendas in the city (Chapter 4)? How do different political systems and contexts of urbanization shape the strategies and tactics that neighborhoods develop, and how to they manage to advance their goals (Chapter 5)? In these chapters, I systematically compare the three neighborhoods of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso with each other, which allow for greater explanatory analysis and methodical assessment of neighborhood rationale and choices. I focus on how activists understood their work, built broader support around them, what was the influence and role of municipal entities, policy makers, and politicians, and how broader urban policies and political structures (especially in Chapter 5 and 6) have influenced community struggles over time.

The third chapter engages in an in-depth analysis of the relationship between sense of place and space, formed collective identity, and mobilization among residents and their supporters. Through an analysis of interviews with activists and their supporters (individuals, nonprofits, foundations, and a few municipal officials or planners) inside and outside the neighborhood, I focus on the ways in which citizens engaged in environmental quality initiatives perceive that their work allowed them to re-build a community from within and remake a place for residents. The fourth chapter analyzes the broader political goals that activists and their supporters advance when they organize for holistic environmental revitalization and how they use environmental work as a way to advance other agendas. The interviews I conducted with residents, local leaders, workers, as well as organizations outside the neighborhood helped me place the struggles of activists within a broader framework of urban processes and political engagement. In both Chapter 3 and 4, I used grounded theory, process tracing, and historic and analytical narratives to present the understanding of their work by neighborhood actors, the meaning they attribute to their engagement, and how they interpreted that their actions contributed to determined outcomes – community reconstruction, place remaking, identity strengthening, land and border control, and democratic strengthening, among others.

The fifth chapter explores the strategies and tactics that residents, community organizations, and local NGOs develop to advance their goals and the rationale behind strategic and tactical choices. I show here that activism is not confined to residents, community leaders, and community organization, but also to larger NGOs, national or international funders, as well as political elites (i.e., policy-makers, elected officials, municipal staff, and city planners). I use grounded theory and process tracing to show how mobilization unfolded over time and space, what the selection of strategies and tactics consisted in and for which reasons, and how activists reached success in their environmental and health endeavors. Finally, the Conclusion chapter summarizes key findings, presents some broader comparison across neighborhoods on their struggles for livability and environmental quality, and offers some recommendations for more just planning and policy decisions for urban revitalization and environmental justice.

1.5 Main arguments

This study of historically distressed neighborhood in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana seeks to understand three dynamics: First, how the engagement of residents and organizations in environmental quality initiatives enable them to reconstruct their community from within; second, to which extent their environmental struggles represent a desire to achieve environmental gains, as opposed to being tools to advance broader political agendas; and third, how do political systems and context of urbanization shape the strategies and tactics that residents and their supporters select, and how do they manage to achieve their goals.

1.5.1 Holistic revitalization and place-remaking

The work of active residents, leaders, and neighborhood community workers in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic stems from a strong emotional connection, community attachment, and place identity, which are themselves filtered by a sense of responsibility towards the neighborhood or the city and by feelings of accomplishments when engaging in neighborhood work. These feelings lead, in turn, to sustained participation in environmental initiatives. In the three neighborhoods, urban environmental justice is embodied in the holistic revitalization of places where people play, learn, live and work all together. Their commitment to the neighborhood broadens traditional understandings of health to include right to physical activity, healthy food, but also to recreational spaces and to places where people feel safe and secure. Their struggles reveal that both physical and psychological dimensions of environmental health must be taken into consideration to achieve environmental justice. Their claims are as much demands in space as demands for space.

If neighborhoods are imbued with specific negative images that people construct of themselves, they are also filled with hopes and nostalgia. As marginalized neighborhoods attempt to revitalize community spaces, build new parks and playground, and develop urban farms and community gardens, they create safe havens, strengthen community bonds, and re-make a place for marginalized residents in the city. Environmental projects serve as a way to nurture the community, address loss, fear of erasure, grief, as well as create a sense of rootedness for a neighborhood, which activists used to consider as a war zone and a destroyed place. Residents are concerned that the neighborhood is losing its identity and that the social fabric is being dismantled. They thus use environmental projects as a tool for place re-making and for creating an urban village, which is embodied by a tight and traditional social fabric, traditional

farming and recreational practices for migrants and immigrants, as well opportunities for socializing, soothing, and protection. In turn, their engagement creates stronger pride, attachment, and connection to the neighborhood. Place-making is thus the participation in both in the means of production of a locale and in the production of meaning (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003).

In other words, residents feel a deep connection to place and realize that their neighborhood, its ties, and traditions are in jeopardy and are being erased. Such awareness and individual and collective identity lead them to fights in which they seek to enhance environmental quality and livability in the context of overall community development and holistic revitalization agenda. Environment becomes intertwined with community development and place-making, and it is important, in the minds of residents, that they do not become separated. In that sense, enhancing the environmental quality of distressed neighborhood is only the tip of the iceberg. Community development becomes a means to advance environmental justice and vice versa. Marginalized neighborhoods use environmental improvements to achieve social objectives within their place. These findings hold true no matter which neighborhood is being considered.

1.5.2 Construction of broader political agendas

The struggles of historically marginalized neighborhood are not only oriented towards the inside of the community. Their struggles attempt to counter their marginalization in the city by challenging the imaginary of public officials and planners who determine what developments need to be prioritized in the neighborhood and what “place” it must have in Barcelona, Havana, and Boston. They resist existing urban processes and developments and defend a Right to their Neighborhood. Activists also fight existing stigmas and stereotypes about low-income and minority residents – that they do not care about the long-term well-being and environmental quality of their neighborhood and are only eager to move to wealthier and more welcoming areas. Most residents of Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley point out that they could have left and chosen to move to different communities, but that they decided to stay.

Residents express a strong connection to the land and to the uses they have developed over time through parks, recreational areas, community gardens, or urban farms. They thus aim at controlling the projects and activities that occur on this territory over the long term, gaining secure tenure over it, and increasing the stewardship of residents towards the new uses of space – parks, community gardens, etc. They aim to re-conquer a damaged land and address spatial inequities in the city. This control over the land and territory leads them to emphasize the need to set up and maintain new physical, social, symbolic, and cultural borders with outsiders who bring with them risks of gentrification, encroachment, and excessive tourism.

The engagement of residents and local organizations in environmental revitalization projects reflects another socio-political goal – achieving empowerment, youth development, and leadership building at the neighborhood level. In turn, such processes create a sense of purpose for residents, increase their commitment to the community, and also help attract greater resources and attention to the neighborhood in the long-term. Activists are thus managing a tricky balance between the rejection of outsiders and a call for support. In addition, through their projects, activists question broader political arrangements in the city as well as existing democratic planning and participation practices. They ask for greater autonomous and

spontaneous management of the urban space – and public spaces in particular. As they fight against outside threats and influences, they create self-managed spaces and new models for democratic planning and participation in the city while transgressing existing norms.

1.5.3 Common patterns of strategies and tactics selection

Four common patterns of strategies and tactics are present in Havana, Boston, and Barcelona despite the differences in histories of urbanization and political systems. First, in the initial stage of environmental revitalization, community groups and residents used “bricolage” and “collage” techniques – piecing pre-existing elements together – for resource-seeking and sharing to fight against environmental degradation and implement showcase revitalization projects. They displayed great resourcefulness and resorted to non-material resources to compensate for a lack of initial financial resources, achieve “quick wins,” and convince other residents that change was possible. They also associated these tactics with complaints, advocacy, protest, and space occupation.

In a consolidation and refinement stage, activists assembled broad, flexible, and versatile coalitions together, which at times included unexpected members joining environmental and health projects in a desire to contribute to broader community reconstruction, strengthen residents’ identity, and combat development processes in the city. Sub-community networks – either small informal groups within or outside the neighborhood or technical expert communities – also turned out to be crucial support for neighborhood residents and community leaders, as they offered technical and legal assistance for projects to gain greater legitimacy and sustainability over time. Here, activists built on spatial capital resources and used an important fabric of informal actors (i.e., relatives, friends, institutions of close physical proximity), as well as common street activities to strengthen their projects.

The creation of coalitions and sub-community networks has been accompanied by the clever use of political opportunity structures and political contexts, but also political traditions in each city. Activists in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley have also creatively used existing political traditions and structures in the city, made open and covert alliances with state officials and staff members, and eventually also attracted funding sources around their endeavors by proving their commitment to their neighborhood as well as their political savviness. They were able to navigate well the convoluted layers of municipal and, at times, national contexts, and this, thanks to the variety of coalition and network members around them.

Last, activists have used community identity and place attachment as a core underlying tactic to bring residents together around environmental improvements. They have cultivated positive attitudes and civic energy about the neighborhood within the community and develop narratives about it. This has been realized through cultural festivals, public workshops emphasizing local history, recreational activities around specific landmarks, art events, etc. The idea was that, if people value and love their neighborhood, they will become more engaged and will want to take part in environmental improvement projects. Residents have thus used cultural and festive traditions to bring residents together and encourage their participation in community gardens, neighborhood cleanups and maintenance, or planning of new sports grounds. In turn, community identity has become strengthened over time, and residents’ sense of community and place reshaped and reconstructed. Residents feel a tighter connection to the place and a stronger

desire to protect it. Residents also re-negotiate meanings and images associated with their space and local identity. Community identity thus functions as a feedback loop.

Rather than core differences among neighborhood strategies and tactics, I find that it is more relevant to speak in terms of idiosyncratic adaptation of strategies and tactics to each context. Nuances between cities are present in the open and transparent level of resource seeking and sharing (from less in Havana, to medium in Boston, and to high in Barcelona), in the length and strength of the contestation cycle (from less in Havana, to medium in Boston, and high in Barcelona), and in the use of community identity itself (around artistic manifestations in Havana, festivities and street parties in Barcelona, to cultural and historic events in Boston). For instance, in an autocratic and centralized regime like Cuba, intense and open protests are not possible. However, a more clever type of contestation such as open complain letters written by kids, signed anonymously by a wide variety of residents, and sent by a community leader with strong ties to important political officials has more chances of being welcomed positively. These nuances reflect the political systems as well as histories of each city.

1.6 Research significance

The field of environmental justice has been developed in the United States through studies of ecological distributional conflicts in marginalized American communities. Europe is almost untouched as a place of analysis of urban environmental justice mobilization, and this despite their prevalence in local politics. In Europe, environmental justice studies are nascent and limited to identifying, through quantitative analyses, disproportionate environmental burdens which minority and poor populations suffer from (Bulkeley & Walker, 2005). In the global South, environmental justice studies generally focus on democracies and also on “brown” injustices. In other words, scholars have not examined community organization patterns for long-term environmental justice in places encompassing different political systems and histories of urbanization. While the categories and framework used by traditional environmental justice scholars do not match perfectly with the European context and with non-democratic societies, the weakness of empirical research makes it difficult to elaborate original models which meet the specificities of other societies and which also allow for rigorous comparative research across contexts. Through this project, I address both issues: to conduct empirical research and to offer a theoretical interpretation of ecological conflicts in Europe and across a variety of political systems and histories of urbanization. I test how the concept of environmental justice can be applied to non US contexts and develop an original theory that reflects the fights of neighborhoods for long term livability.

This present study improves our knowledge of local environmental justice mobilizations, which are usually perceived as individuals or groups organizing against specific environmental threats. It helps determine how proactive fights for environmental and health benefits differ from reactive efforts to address environmental risks in distressed communities. Neighborhoods protesting against Locally Unwanted Land Uses such as incinerators or refineries, have a clear identifiable target that causes environmental and health harm. In the case of long-term neighborhood transformation to achieve environmental and health equity, the participation of local residents might be more sporadic and less active, and their demands a harder sell to planners and decision-makers. My dissertation thus illuminates to what extent the discourses and

strategies developed by neighborhoods to access long-term environmental benefits are affected (or not) by this difference in scope and visibility between clear environmental threats and long-term environmental quality improvements. I analyze how low-income and minority residents make proactive environmental and health claims, address long-term inequalities in urban planning decisions, and gain political power in a city that has traditionally excluded them. In a few words, this research provides a new lens on urban environmental scholarship by analyzing an emerging nexus between environmental justice, place attachment, and community development. Here, urban environmental justice becomes a means to achieve community development and vice versa. Environmental improvements are thus not only about the environment, but about other social and political objectives that communities of color advance.

My dissertation also examines how larger contexts of urbanization, segregation, and planning decisions have influenced the construction of local identities, as well as new uses of space that value and strengthen these identities. Over time, residents and local organizations have interpreted these broader contexts to build local organization and mobilization for greater environmental justice. In other words, this study offers nuanced and in-depth analysis of the relationship between sense of space, formed collective identity, and strategy development in neighborhoods that mobilize to achieve greater environmental and health benefits. Through this research, I build stronger connections between social movement research and urban research on community identity by improving our understanding of the dialectic between mobilization - as influenced and shaped by community identity - and community identity used as political strategy. This study also probes how the organization and mobilization of neighborhoods for improved environmental conditions constitute the occasion to question, realign, (re)-create identities in the process of gathering support. Last, my dissertation uses a political science lens to analyze how organized neighborhood groups defend particular meanings of spaces and build specific types of engagement with decision-makers in cities that encompass a variety of political systems. This study analyzes how political systems shape the strategies and tactics that residents and organizations use to revitalize their neighborhoods, and offers a critical comparative analysis of resistance, adaptation, and negotiation strategies in a well-established democracy, a young democracy, and an autocratic regime. Here, despite differences in experiences of urbanization and political systems, I find that residents in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Havana select similar patterns of strategies and tactics to achieve their goals.

From a policy and planning perspective, I start with the tenet that that long-term environmental improvements in cities and communities will be achieved by creating livable, healthy, and sustainable neighborhoods and overcoming deep historic structural and spatial inequalities that prevent poor and minority communities from living in high quality neighborhoods. This study thus unravels what broader mechanisms and processes allow them to gain greater political power and voice in the city, and address long-term inequalities in planning decisions over neighborhood improvements. Last, by accounting for how strategic responses to environmental degradation contribute to the construction of democratic spaces in neighborhoods, the findings contributes to policy-relevant knowledge on the types and structures of participation and mobilization that allow vulnerable communities to gain influence on planning decisions in a variety of political and socio-economic contexts.

In terms of methodological and epistemological contributions, this study brings a new lens to the traditional international development literature. I attempt to move beyond traditional

research in development studies, which has tended to focus on the realities of developing countries themselves and the obstacles countries face in developing economically and socially and adopting the growth model of developed countries. Such research has often neglected to consider how neighborhoods and communities in dissimilar economic, cultural, and political settings mobilize against similar environmental and health challenges and what commonalities researchers might find across cases to explain similar positive outcomes or similar strategies, for instance. Eventually, I explain how local organizations and groups in both developed and developing contexts receive support for their community projects, how they leverage power in their relations with decision-makers, and how their struggles over environmental and health conditions in impoverished neighborhoods constitute the basis to question broader political and institutional power systems in the city.

2 Stories of Neighborhood Abandonment, Degradation, and Socio-Environmental Transformation

In Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, the struggles of neighborhood activists are inserted within deep historical processes of marginalization and exclusion. Their actions are also situated within a broader context of racial, social, and spatial inequities, which have influenced the mindset and positioning of residents and their supporters. In each neighborhood, activists respond to a past of unequal development, overall degradation and abandonment, and worsening of environmental and health conditions. This foundation chapter is structured around the history of each neighborhood, how neighborhoods have evolved over time, and the concrete environmental and health improvements brought to their neighborhood through a diversity of projects. This chapter draws essentially on secondary data sources, as well as interviews with active leaders, residents, community workers, NGOs, foundations, planners, and decision-makers in order to show the neighborhood transformations over twenty to thirty years.

This chapter first relates the stories of abandonment, marginalization, and degradation faced by each neighborhood, and examines the baseline conditions of environmental neglect and exclusion in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso. Dudley is a neighborhood that lived through decades of disinvestment, white flight, and racial violence while Casc Antic has experienced periods of abandonment combined with more recent unequal social and environmental revitalization that were part of democratic Barcelona's attempts to (re)develop the city. Last, Cayo Hueso embodies a slow process of decadence and degradation first under the US occupation and later under the Castro regime. Such historical grounding serves as the base from which environmental improvements initiatives have emerged from the end of the 1980s. In the last part of the chapter, I present and analyze the environmental initiatives and projects that active residents, leaders, and community organizations have pushed for and successfully led in Barcelona, Havana, and Boston in response to inequalities in access to decent environmental conditions.

2.1 A long process of environmental revitalization in Dudley, Boston

2.1.1 Historical dynamics of exclusion and marginalization

2.1.1.1 White flight, arrival of new immigrants, and slow degradation: 1950s-1960s

In the 1940s, Dudley was a thriving, vibrant, and active neighborhood within the broader district of Roxbury, with two business areas filled with restaurants and shops (Settles, 1994). The area around Upham's Corner, which was at the intersection of five streetcar lines, was flourishing. Coffee shops and barber shops were filled with activity. The Saint Patrick Church at the corner of Dudley and Magazine Street was offering strong support and a greater sense of integration for newly arrived Catholic Italian and Irish immigrants (Warner, 1978). However, things started turning sour for Dudley at the end of the 1950s when white residents left en masse to the prosperous and modern suburbs in search for more space, better schools, services, and infrastructure (Levine & Harmon, 1992). The white population in the neighborhood decreased from 95% in 1950 to 45% in 1970. In parallel, the availability of manufacturing jobs and commercial activities declined in Dudley and left residents with twice as much unemployment as

other sections of Boston and doted of poor municipal services (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). The housing that white middle class owners left behind was substandard, as demonstrated by faulty plumbing, outdated heating system, and facades with peeling paint (Rosenthal, 1976).

In parallel, in the US South, the mechanization of agriculture and mining extraction left millions of workers without jobs and large numbers of families migrated to the North of the country. In the 1950s and 1960s, the migration of Black rural residents and immigration from Cape-Verdean immigrants changed the ethnic composition of the place. Between 1940 and 1960, the number of African American residents in Boston increased from 20,000 to 60,000 (Lukas, 1985). By the 1970s, Black residents formed 53% of Roxbury's population. During the 1970s, immigrants from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, and Cuba expanded the Latino population in Dudley, which reached 28% in 1980 (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). As newcomers arrived, older residents moved out in flocks, and rent started to fall, landlords neglected their properties, tax revenues fell, and infrastructure maintenance and services began to suffer serious cuts (Warner & Durlach, 1987). At the end of the 1970s, poverty rates in Roxbury skyrocketed with 32% of households living in poverty and blacks suffering from higher poverty rates than their white counterparts. (Cotton, 1992).

By the end of the 1970s, the commercial sector around Dudley Street, mostly banks, small businesses, and restaurants, and industrial plants started to decline and left Dudley empty of its motor of economic development. Manufacturing jobs decreased from 20,000 in 1947 to 4,000 in 1981, leaving Roxbury residents with twice the unemployment rate as Boston's overall unemployment (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). The number of businesses on Dudley street fell from 210 in 1950 to 74 in 1970s. Disinvestment and abandonment characterized the neighborhood. Landlords grudgingly rented their properties to newcomers while refusing to improve their properties, leaving, for instance, decrepit gas-tank hot water heating systems inside the houses, even if they were mostly gone in other Boston neighborhoods. For property owners, it was often less cumbersome to deal with Boston building inspectors and pay fines than dealing with banks to obtain renovation loans (Levine & Harmon, 1992).

In contrast to white residents moving easily to the suburbs of Boston, Roxbury residents of color experienced substandard living conditions, as well as racism and discrimination when looking to rent or buy a house. The neighborhood was redlined and mortgages were not granted to people renovating or building a house, as banks considered that any area with a large number of minority residents was in decline and not worth investing in (Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2003). Arson was so common that kids were awoken every night by the firefighters sirens, but the police did not bother investigating them properly. Drugs were sold openly in the streets in front of residents' home without any fear of being arrested. Such dire conditions transformed the neighborhood from a diverse and peaceful place to live for working-class families to a segregated ghetto where people became afraid of talking to each other and waiting for the bus.

White exodus to the Boston suburbs emptied the city of nearly 30% of its population in three decades. Immigration from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia did not replace former residents, which left the city with widespread abandoned areas, failing tax collection, and low rent. The passage of the urban renewal legislation at the federal level was welcomed by the City of Boston as an opportunity to clear degraded areas and rebuild expensive apartment towers (Warner & Durlach, 1987). An example of urban renewal in Boston is the West End area near

the Charles River, where blocks of neighborhoods were cleared for apartment towers and 2,600 families were displaced (Green, 1986). The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) put forth the vision of a New Boston, a revitalized downtown close to the financial district along with the construction of profitable and tax-yielding downtown real estate (Levine & Harmon, 1992).

Another similar controversial project, Tent City, did not achieve the desired objectives of the planners and developers. Here, the City of Boston and the BRA had planned to tear down a block of low-income housing in the South End part to replace it with parking spaces for nearby office workers. However, in 1968, a coalition of black and white residents formed to protest the city-sponsored plan to (King, 1981) Mayor White also sought to make way for the gentry and encouraged local realtors to showcase the South End as a good place to live for white professionals and help them access the resources they needed to move in. The situation was particularly delicate as the Boston Redevelopment Authority had no plan to build low-income housing despite the increasing need for healthy and quality homes for poor residents in the South End (Warner & Durlach, 1987). After days of protests, sit-ins, nights and days spent lived on the lots in tents, and police arrests, the coalition of residents won the battle, and the BRA laid out plans for housing construction. That said, housing was only built a few decades after in Tent City, after thousands of residents lost their homes and got displaced to the Dudley neighborhood.

During that period, anti urban renewal protesters often merged with the anti-highway movement, which arose in Boston at the end of the 1960s. Designs for highway construction in Boston planned for adding a new elevated highway on top of cleared land in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain (JP), as well as in other parts of the city. A wide coalition of academics, local activists, politicians, groups in Roxbury and JP led the opposition to the highway plans, and managed to convince Massachusetts Governor Francis Sargent to call off the construction in 1970. To date, much of the land cleared for the new highway in Roxbury and JP still remains vacant, and many coalition members continued their activism in Boston through anti-violence and gardening work in Boston's marginalized neighborhoods (Warner & Durlach, 1987)

2.1.1.2 Violence, desegregation, and racism in the 1970s

In the 1970s, the Civil Rights movement in Boston gave rise to heightened protests against discriminatory practices. Black neighborhood schools in Roxbury were in fact deteriorating. Kids attended schools with broken windows and furniture, used old battered textbooks, and teachers often used whips to punish black kids (Lukas, 1985). When, in 1974, a US District Court judge ordered desegregation measures in Boston public schools, white and black students started being bused back and forth from their neighborhood to schools to create mixed classrooms (Warner & Durlach, 1987). As desegregation measures were implemented, the ensuing violence in the white neighborhoods brought with it racial attacks, house arson, and murders. Violence erupted dramatically against African American students from Roxbury and Dorchester bused to the Irish neighborhood of South Boston. In 1974, the buses driving black students were stoned and nine black students were injured while white families shouted racial slurs at them, re-claiming the sovereignty of the territory and of "their" country (MacDonald, 1999). Major concerns arose when the white political leaders failed to address racial violence.

At the time of desegregation, busing, and violence in Boston, a new coalition was born out of local leader Mel King's 1979 campaign. The campaign involved the development of a new

coalition made of a network of people from different communities who aimed at tackling a series of issues: violence, access, employment, energy, wealth distribution, taxes and representation. Interest groups such as the Alliance for Rent Control also participated and helped develop position papers reflecting proposed solutions. Eventually, the campaign led to the creation of a Boston-wide, neighborhood-based, pluri-issue organization, the Boston Peoples Organization which sought to gain control of neighborhoods, jobs, and governments. Their idea was to empower Boston communities and oppressed residents and their work marked a new stage in a progressive political force in the city (King, 1981). Mel King pushed people to take responsibility for their own community and eliminate social ills, discrimination, and racism in communities of color. Part of the community development plan was decentralization in communities to take responsibility in solving one's own problems and tackle issues of housing code enforcement (lead, unsafe and unsanitary housing), garbage on street and alleys, air pollution, open space development, recreation, alternative energy sources, and gardening (King, 1981).

Dudley decline became more pronounced during the 1970s and 1980s when the arrival of working-class residents of color and their demand for housing was coupled with arson by developers eager to push out low-income populations out of Dudley to gut rehab the building and sell them, or by white property owners eager to collect insurance money and buy new property in the suburbs (Layzer, 2006). Between 1947 and 1976, half of Dudley's housing stocks, namely 648 buildings, got destroyed (Shutkin, 2000). As a result, in the 1980s Dudley had a staggering amount of vacant land (21% or 1,300 parcels). Illegal trash transfers in the neighborhood were also the symbol of the city neglect. By 1990, one out of two Dudley children lived below the poverty line and was malnourished, and the neighborhood also had a disproportionate level of homicide deaths, with 31 people killed by homicide in the Dudley core area between 1987 and 1991 – out of 481 for Boston (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). Between 1970 and 1980, a fourth of Boston white population left the city, leaving behind rampant inter-racial violence, abandoned minority neighborhoods such as Dudley, and flagrant poverty (Warner & Durlach, 1987). In sum, over the years, marginalization, poverty, stereotypes, and prejudice had limited the life expectancies and opportunities of Dudley's residents.

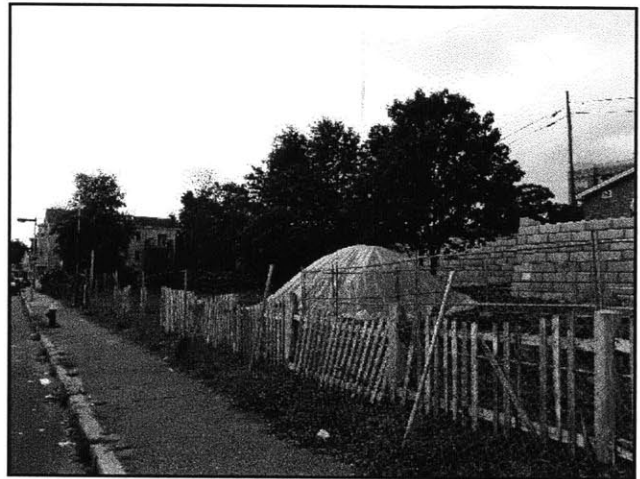
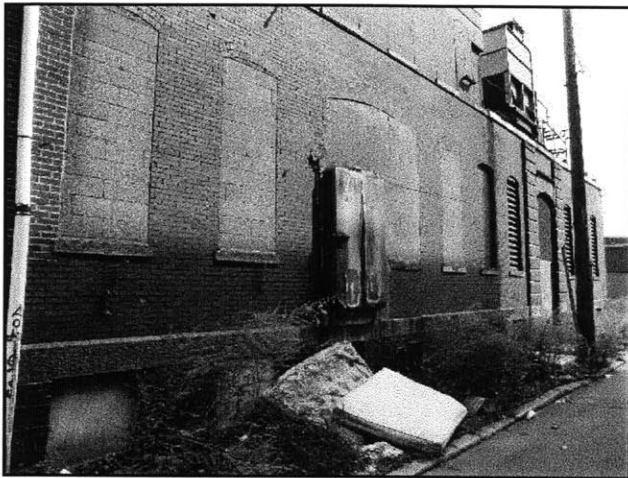
2.1.2 Exclusion and environmental neglect in Dudley

2.1.2.1 Arsons and dumping

At the beginning of the 1980s, one-third of Dudley's land was vacant, approximately 1,300 lots in a 1.5 square mile neighborhood (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). As a result of years of arsons, abandonment and destruction, Dudley became a dumping ground. Contractors from outside the city, residents from other neighborhoods, and Boston builders came to empty their trucks full of old appliances, rotten meat, auto carcasses, unused construction materials, and trash into these empty lots that sat literally in the background of residents' home. This dumping was accompanied by a growth in illicit activities such as drug dealing or illegal toxic waste discarding, as their authors took advantage of the poor lighting and lack of police attention around the vacant lots (Settles, 1994). Many schoolyards were also dilapidated and under-used, reflecting the lack of funding for public schools in low-income neighborhoods, as well as the takeover of these spaces for criminal activity. They were just considered wasted urban land rather than physically active environments which could improve learning and offer greater

recreational opportunities for kids (Lopez, Campbell, & Jennings, 2008).

At that time, a concentration of contaminating industrial businesses such as auto-repair shops, waste handling companies, scrap metal dealer, and truck storage facilities filled Dudley, which were intertwined with dense housing developments, private houses and schools. By the mid-1990s, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection declared that Dudley contained 54 hazardous waste sites, including many contaminated with lead, chromium, mercury, asbestos, and petroleum constituents. Those sites were the consequences of all the industrial activities that developed in Roxbury over the past decades and whose activities were not regulated or watched. For instance, oil-based contaminants were the by-products of auto body workshops, gas station, and underground leaking storage tanks (Shutkin, 2000).



Photos: Trash dumping (left) and empty lot contaminated with asbestos in Dudley (right)

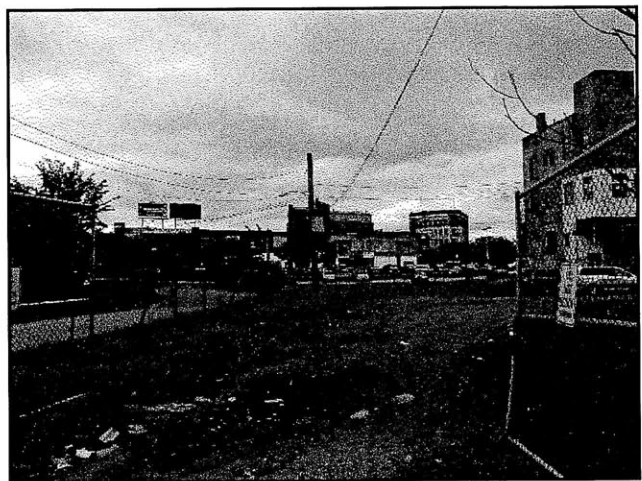
Additional environmental and health problems in Dudley originated from the increased presence in the 1980s of trash transfer stations, many of them illegal but uncontrolled. Their negative impacts on the neighborhood often stemmed from the odors, noise, and noxious air emissions they released. In addition to these sources of contamination, lead exposure and poisoning had dramatically affected the health of local residents, through contact with contaminated soil or water in particular (Settles, 1994). At the end of the 1980s, almost each street in the Dudley area had a case of child lead poisoning and lead contamination has been a major health threat in Dudley. Groundwater was also contaminated with a series of metals from foundries that have leached into the soil and groundwater, VOCs from underground storage tanks, and other toxic substances from a variety of sources. With such a high prevalence of environmental pollutants, asthma hospitalization rates in Roxbury were 5.5 times Massachusetts average (Division of Health Care Finance and Policy (DHCFF), 1997).

Environmental and health problems in Dudley did not find a response in existing environmental laws and regulations. Massachusetts' hazardous waste site cleanup law – Chapter 21E of the MA General Law, – modeled after the Superfund Act, makes it cumbersome for affected parties to hold a private company or individual liable. Even though 21E requires the

parties responsible for land and groundwater contamination to remediate affected land and pay in full for cleanup, parties have generally chosen to litigate the issue of liability to delay cleanup. Or, they have simply negated responsibility. Furthermore, even after a cleanup is completed, parties can still be held responsible to third parties, providing no end point to liability (Shutkin, 2000). Consequently, polluters often abandoned sites, and moved to cheaper land outside the city. Furthermore, trash transfer stations and other unwanted land uses fell between the cracks of most environmental laws. Their status of small businesses striped them of being required to provide comprehensive environmental review under the MA Environmental Policy Act. They are considered as ordinary and case-by-case basis land use decisions by Boston's zoning board, which, as such, lacks formal environmental review authority. In parallel, Boston officials ignored Dudley residents' pleas to address routine dumping and health hazards until later in the 1980s.

2.1.2.2 A food and recreational desert

In addition to environmental and health hazards, the neighborhood lacked major facilities that were common in other areas of Boston: supermarkets, pharmacies, community centers, parks, and recreational facilities (Settles, 1994). Dudley was considered a "food desert" (Gallagher, 2006) and fitness wasteland, leading community residents to have dramatic rates of obesity and cardiovascular disease. According to the Boston Public Health Commission, in 2001, heart disease was the second leading cause of death for Roxbury residents with 213 deaths per 100,000, and obesity was the first key health issue in the community. In 2001, 61.8% of all Roxbury Black residents and 62.8% of Latino residents were declared obese. In addition, the rate of inadequate physical activity in Roxbury reached 72% against 63% in Boston as a whole against 38% in high income neighborhoods. In 2000, in the entire city of Boston, 71% of Blacks and 69.4% of Latinos had inadequate vegetable and fruit consumption (Boston Public Health Commission, 2004). The situation was particularly dramatic for Dudley. At the end of the 1990s, Dudley was a neighborhood with little or no access to foods needed to maintain a healthy diet. Grocery stores had fled the area while fast foods and convenience stores offering pre-packaged and fried food had populated it. Residents had little time or money to access further, and often expensive, healthy food options. They were part of the 2.3 million Americans who lived more than 1 mile from a supermarket and do not have access to a car (Ver Ploeg et al., 2009).



Photos: One of the numerous car and bus depots along with a fast food advertising sign (left) and an example of a desolated area in Dudley (right)

In sum, residents in Dudley have witnessed their neighborhood become slowly a desert zone and contaminated wasteland. However, despite these dire conditions, residents, community organizations, and environmental NGOs decided to take action and put a stop to this downward spiral of dumping and abandonment through community-based environmental revival initiatives.

2.1.3 Community-Based Environmental Revival Initiatives in Dudley

2.1.3.1 Early land clean-up and lead contamination and asthma prevention

On a beautiful summer day, when visitors walk through the streets of Roxbury, it is hard to imagine the succession of historical periods that have made Dudley what it is today, having been once a small colonial farming town, a Boston middle class suburb, an industrial site patched with immigrant housing, a blighted arson-ridden devastated post-industrial neighborhood, and now a rising neighborhood, again. Over the past twenty years, active residents and leaders together with community organization such as DSNI, The Food Project, Project Right, Body by Brandy, The Haley House, environmental NGOs such the ACE and The Food Project as well as Boston-wide institutions such as the Boston Schoolyard Initiative have turned Dudley around, and cleaned up and redeveloped more than 600 empty lots.⁶

Contaminated and devastated lots were at the forefront of early restoration efforts in Dudley. In 1984, following BRA and consultant reports that outlined Dudley's extreme conditions and destruction, the Riley Foundation took the decision to support the neighborhood reconstruction, as a broader symbol of rebuilding Boston's disadvantaged communities. The foundation had been approached by Nelson Merced, the Director of the community organization Alianza Hispana, who took the trustees on a tour of Dudley. The trustees were in state of shock as they witnessed the devastation of such a large area in central Boston, and decided upon their visit to concentrate more of the foundation's resources on Dudley rather than disperse them in a rather ineffective way in different projects throughout the city (Medoff & Sklar, 1994).

A few weeks after the visit, the Riley Foundation commissioned the Dudley Advisory Group with the creation a new organization. 1985 was the year that the now well-known Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) was born, with a mission of "empowering Dudley residents to organize, plan for, and create and control a vibrant, high quality, and diverse neighborhood in collaboration with community partners" (Shutkin, 2000). DSNI began its mobilization work with a comprehensive cleanup campaign, *Don't Dump on Us*, which created the basis for sustained resident participation in environmental efforts and unified them around a common goal of neighborhood improvement (Layzer, 2006). The campaign, initiated in the summer of 1986 with over a hundred residents and community leaders such as Father Waldron and Sister Margaret, was centered around the clean up of more than 1,300 lots (fifty of them had been diagnosed as hazardous waste sites). In 1987, DSNI went on to target two illegal trash

⁶ This section is not an account -- already well documented (Layzer, 2006; Medoff & Sklar, 1994; Putnam et al., 2003; Shutkin, 2000) of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative --, but rather a comprehensive story of neighborhood environmental revitalization efforts

transfers in Dudley, which were infested with rats and mosquitoes and posed serious health threats, and managed to convince the Public Health Department to get them shut down.

Upon its initial successes, DSNI proceeded to involve citizens in a community planning process in order to design a plan to achieve a broad-based revitalization. With the support of the Riley Foundation, DSNI hired a team of planning consultants from the DC firm DAC International in 1987 to develop a community-based plan (later updated in 1998). A broader principle guiding DSNI's action was the idea of community control over the land. In 1986, however, 181 parcels of empty land in Dudley were still owned by absentee private companies or individuals, while the City of Boston owned some other lots. To gain control and ownership of the land, DSNI lobbied the City of Boston to gain the power of eminent domain over a triangle of 64 acres of (including 30 of them as vacant) abandoned land – later known as the Dudley Triangle – within its borders. Despite doubts that residents would be able to turn a whole blighted area into a vigorous and dynamic neighborhood, the BRA relinquished its control over the land and accepted in 1988 to grant DSNI with the power of eminent domain (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). Later that year, DSNI created DNI (Dudley Neighbors Incorporated), an redevelopment corporation and community land trust which buys privately owned lots.

As health issues were looming in Dudley, in the early 1990s local groups turned their attention to one of the most severe problems in the neighborhood: Lead hazards and lead poisoning. As part of those early efforts, in 1991 two lawyers created an environmental justice organization – ACE (Alternatives for Community and Environment) in Dudley Square. Among others, ACE provides legal assistance and capacity and leadership building to neighborhoods affected by illegal dumping and pollution, and this through an “empowerment practice” (Faber, Loh, & Jennings, 2003). In parallel to ACE's efforts, DSNI launched a new campaign in 1991 – Dudley PRIDE (People and Resources Investing in Dudleys' Environment) – in order to improve local environmental health. A few years later, in 1994 ACE and DSNI joined forces as they became founding members of the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Network, which took on three legal cases in Dudley – a trash dumping and chemical storage on four properties, an illegal trash transfer stations, and a local business dumping noxious liquids into a storm drain (Layzer, 2006). ACE also led a comprehensive effort to clean up lots. In 1995, it joined DSNI, the Bowdoin Street Health Center, the Environment Defense Fund, and the Massachusetts Campaign to Clean Up Hazardous Waste to create the Neighborhoods Against Urban Pollution (NAUP), a model of resident-led organizing to identify, map, prioritize, and clean up environmental hazards, which included sites in Dudley.

Much of the early work of community organizations and NGOs in Dudley was geared towards supporting safe gardening practices among local gardeners. In 1994, Ros Everdell and Trish Settles, two environmental specialists and organizers within DSNI, launched a lead poisoning prevention project and worked with local area gardeners, among others, to increase residents' awareness of soil contamination and develop lead abatement strategies (Shutkin, 2000). Further, in 1998, The Food Project, a new environmental NGO located on Dudley Street and specialized in sustainable and healthy agriculture, initiated work in 160 backyard gardens within a mile-radius of their office to educate gardeners about lead in urban soils, and teach them simple and safe gardening practices. Its staff also started testing the amount of lead in gardens –

to date 113 soil tests have been completed – in partnership with researchers at Wellesley College⁷. The Food Project has also worked with gardeners to identify less contaminated sites within their backyard and select crops that do not accumulate lead as easily as leafy greens do. If a garden is severely contaminated, the staff then proposes different types of remediation.⁸

Beyond lead contamination prevention and remediation, local organizations and residents joined forces early on to address air pollution in Dudley. As a central hub for several bus routes in Boston and the recipient of many truck and bus depots, Dudley Square is particularly affected by air pollution. As a result, in 1997, ACE launched the Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project (REEP), which builds youth leadership in Roxbury through a school-based environmental justice curriculum, an after-school youth leadership program, and youth-led organizing projects. One of core REEP's initiatives has been the mapping of diesel bus concentrations and truck facilities in Roxbury. This mapping has served as a base for successfully advocating the MBTA – Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority – to convert public diesel bus fleet to cleaner alternatives.

2.1.3.2 Open space, parks, playgrounds, and community centers development

As part of environmental improvement initiatives in Dudley, residents and local organizations have dedicated much attention to open space, parks, and playground rehabilitation and development. Early on, in 1992, DSNI hired neighborhood youths as supervisors and staff of two landscaping crews working on four community gardens maintenance and street beautification (Layzer, 2006). In 1996, DSNI created the Dudley Town Common, a series of passive open spaces designed with residents. Situated at the intersection of Blue Hill Avenue and Dudley Street, Dudley Common welcomes visitors and residents with colorful artwork, sitting spaces, performances, and a green space. Among the many achievements of DSNI is the Dennis Street Park built in 2009 through two grants from the state Urban Self-Help funds and the City of Boston Capital Improvement Program. The budget for the park, \$550,000, incorporates a space for kids' water play features as well as play area with equipment (Parks and Recreation Department, 2007). In Dudley, additional park revitalization and clean-up efforts have been coordinated by the Youth Environmental Network, a group of professionals and local organizations training youth residents to help with local parks maintenance and stewardship.

A lot of the open space revitalization efforts in Dudley are associated with environmental education programs and projects taking place in neighborhood parks and schoolyards. For instance, the Food Project has partnered with the Shirley Eustis House Association and built an Urban Learning Farm at the Shirley House – the former mansion of Governors Shirley and Eustis, and today a national historic landmark. This demonstration and education farm was created for school kids, youth, and adults in the community, who attend educational workshops on farming and environmental education. It uses raised bed gardening as a way to grow safely on urban soil and maximize growth. In addition, the Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI), born in 1995 out of the advocacy from the Boston Green Space Alliance, has been working to revitalize public school yards as historically neglected spaces. Along with schools and the community, BSI

⁷ The results show that 82% of these gardens tested have lead concentrations above the MA-Department of Environmental Protection reportable limit of 400 ppm.

⁸ For more information, see <http://thefoodproject.org/community-programs>

facilitates the re-construction of abandoned schoolyards, which are often lined with games, maps, a garden or natural area, an amphitheater or stage as a space in which a teacher can organize a class, and some play equipments (BSI, 2009). Schoolyards are now productive environments for creative learning and playing and a new type of open space accessible to neighborhood residents⁹. In Dudley, BSI has orchestrated interventions at the Dearborn Middle School, the Emerson Elementary School, and the Mason Elementary School.



Photos: A new kids tot lot (left) and schoolyard at the Mason School (right) in Dudley

In addition to such structured and formal initiatives, several informal neighborhood associations in Dudley have formed around open space improvements and urban sustainability. One such organization is the Upham's Corner Westside Neighborhood Association. Its leaders bring residents together to plan neighborhood improvements and rally residents around regular street cleanings, community garden work, and environmental sustainability projects more generally. The association has recently received a grant from the Urban Ecology Institute's City Roots program, a program created to promote collaborative, resident-informed processes for redeveloping Boston's vacant lots, and to bring rain barrels, composters, and raised garden beds for sustainable gardening projects and ecological restoration more generally.

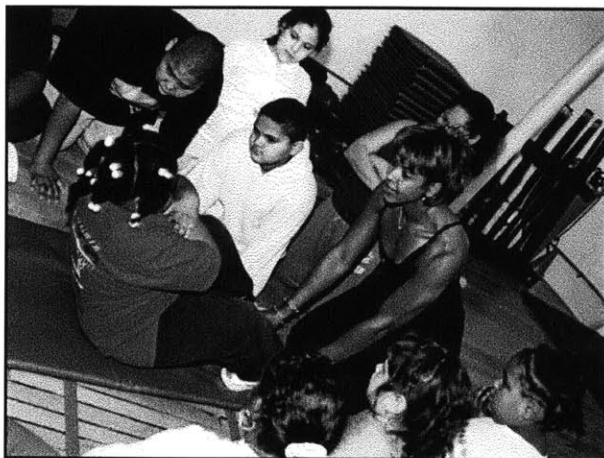
Last, increasingly, and as a response to health issues such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases, residents and organizations have put much emphasis on renovating and creating new sports grounds in or next to parks, as well as community centers with gyms and sports equipment. In the early years of its creation, DSNI reclaimed the Mary Hannon Park – the only park located on Dudley Street, – which was a crime and drug ridden park, through a campaign of cultural pride, healthy recreation, and leisure activities called the Community Summerfest and through the permanent occupation of the park (Medoff & Sklar, 1994). DSNI also pushed for and coordinated the creation of two new community centers – Orchard Gardens and Vine Street.

⁹ For more information, see <http://www.schoolyards.org/overview.htm>

Similar endeavors of creating greater physical activity opportunities have been led by Project Right – a community organization promoting neighborhood stabilization and economic development (Project Right, 2008b). To date, three of its core current programs have a strong environment and sports component. For instance, in the Safe Havens program, Project Right staff has invested organizational and human resources into developing multi-purpose facilities providing athletic facilities, academic, prevention, and intervention services for school age children and their families. In addition, in the Green Space Improvements Program, Project Right staff, members, and volunteers have achieved and coordinated the partial or full renovations of tot lots and playgrounds, such as the Holborn Street tot lot for \$375,000 (Project Right, 2008a).

One of Dudley's activists' latest and most remarkable achievements in regards to sports and recreational facilities is the construction of the Kroc Center on Dudley Street, slated for completion in 2011. With the support from the Kroc Foundation – a charitable foundation funded by Joan Kroc, the widow of Mac Donald's founder – the new center will host a 6.5 acre, \$115.5 million dollar facility featuring an aquatic center, gym, fitness center, as well as a library, chapel, performing arts center, computer labs, and conference room (Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, 2009). It will be the largest community center in the history of Massachusetts. The design of the center was proposed and ratified by community residents who came together around meetings and workshops convened and led by DSNI.

At a smaller scale but nonetheless extremely effective in promoting physical activity in the neighborhood is the Body by Brandy Fitness studio. Located in Dudley Square, Body by Brandy is a beautiful facility, offering programming, personal training, nutrition counseling, cardiovascular and strength training. It was founded in 1996 by Brandy Cruthird, as one of the first and only Black women owned gyms in the country. Amidst extraordinary accomplishments and rewards, Brandy's most notable success is the Body By Brandy 4 Kidz nonprofit program. For this program, Brandy and her staff receive prescriptions from participating health care providers for obese kids to receive workout classes and learn fitness lifestyle habits (Body by Brandy 4 Kidz, 2011). As part of the workouts, Brandy incorporates games to make the training more fun for kids and youth and organizes sessions for them to develop a positive body image and maximize their potentials.



Photos: A workout session at Body By Brand 4 Kidz (left, Photo Ted Lewis – Bay State Banner) and a new basketball court in Dudley

2.1.3.3 The development of fresh and healthy food options

In Dudley, high obesity rates and cardio-vascular diseases are not linked only to the lack of exercise, but also to unhealthy diet and scarce consumption of fresh produce. Early on in Dudley's revitalization work, active leaders, community organizations, and environmental NGOs concentrated much of their efforts on developing urban agriculture to respond to residents' interest in community gardens, farms, and fresh markets and improve their access to produce.

Urban agriculture and community gardens are an old tradition in Boston, with the first gardens developed post World War II in the Fenway area as part of the Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park system. In 1975, activists and gardeners led by Boston resident Charlotte Kahn joined forces to create BUG – Boston Urban Gardeners – and worked tirelessly with Roxbury residents, among others, to transform blighted urban land into community gardens. BUG took advantage of the roots of new residents in cultures in which farming helped them secure sustainable livelihoods. As the number of community gardens in Boston grew but financial resources got tighter, BUG merged with the Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN). BNAN was originally created in 1977 to “preserve, expand and improve urban open space through community organizing, acquisition, ownership, programming, development and management of special kinds of urban land - Urban Wilds, Greenways and Community Gardens.” In 1982, BNAN began its work protecting, creating, and managing community gardens in Boston's marginalized neighborhoods, including Roxbury and Dorchester.¹⁰



Photos: Savin Maywood (left) and Dacia Woodcliff (right) community gardens

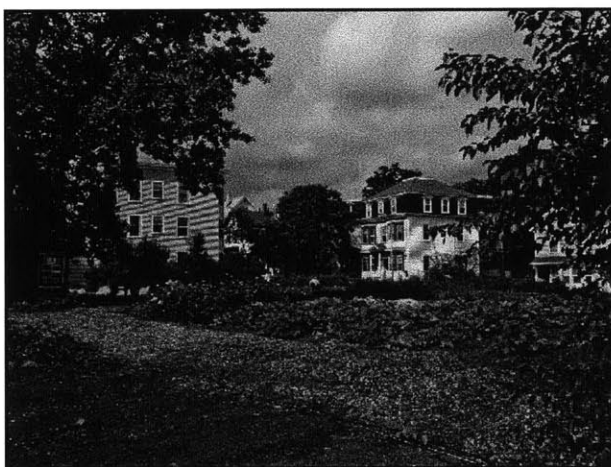
In Dudley, local garden leaders or garden coordinators took the lead early on in cleaning-up of empty lots, dividing up the lots into plots for residents, and organizing farming and social activities inside the community gardens. Over the years, gardeners have received regular

¹⁰ For more information, see <http://www.bostonnatural.org/communitygardens.htm>. Over the years, BNAN has helped over 10,000 gardeners in Boston plan for gardens, acquire property, and design and manage initial capital improvements. It oversees 150 gardens all around the city.

guidance from BNAN, which today supports 13 community gardens in Dudley. Gardeners participate in BNAN workshops in safe gardening, sustainable agriculture, planting and care techniques, and they support for educational initiatives and social events in the gardens. BNAN also helps garden coordinators organize the garden each year and ensures its well functioning (Boston Natural Areas Network, 2006).

In addition to BNAN, DSNI played a strong leadership as part of early urban agriculture efforts in the neighborhood. In 1994 and 1995, the hire of environmental organizer Trish Settles and Executive Director Greg Watson brought new energy around urban agriculture. Before joining DSNI, Watson was Commissioner of the MA Department of Agriculture, staff member of the environmental NGO New Alchemy, and a firm believer in urban agriculture to create new community assets. In 1997, upon the completion of a community visioning exercise, DSNI launched the Urban Agriculture Strategy, which included cleanup of brownfields and vacant parcels to redevelop them for food production. DSNI linked community health with economic development (Shutkin, 2000). With support from the EPA, the MA Highway Department, and a \$172,000 grant from the Ford Foundation and \$60,000 from the Noyes Foundation, sites in Dudley received environmental remediation to become community gardens. A 10,000 square foot greenhouse was also built, but remained unused until recently (DSNI, 2007) .

Furthermore, Dudley is home to three urban farms run by The Food Project. In 1991, drawing on his experience as a farmer, organizer, educator, and activist and responding to the lack of connection of youth and young adults to the land, Ward Cheney, a Lincoln and Weston, MA, resident founded The Food Project.¹¹ As the Food Project established its lots, it received technical and legal support from ACE on land transfer issues. Today, the largest lot is a two-acre parcel on West Cottage Ave, and was once the site of 16 houses located on a cul-de-sal. This parcel has also reserved space for community gardens for residents. The Langdon street lot is a 0.5 acre parcel. The Food Project also grows produce on a 6,000 square feet rooftop garden at the Boston Medical center (The Food Project, 2011). Last, the organization maintains an apple orchard planted on the site of the Shirley Eustis House by Earthworks, public fruit tree plantings.



Photos: The Food Project West Cottage lot (left) and Farmers' Market (right)

¹¹ See: <http://thefoodproject.org/history>

Every year, the Food Project grows over 250,000 pounds of chemical-pesticide-free food for charitable donation and youth-driven food enterprise. The Food Project is mostly known for its summer and academic year youth program in which 140 young people from Dudley and Lincoln, MA come together to farm on the different lots owned by the Food Project.¹² Most of The Food Project produce is sold through subsidized sale at farmers' markets, including one on Tuesdays and Thursdays on Dudley Common, as well as through "Community Supported Agriculture"¹³ (CSA) crop shares. The Dudley Street farmers' market offers fruit from local orchards and goods from local bakeries. Low-income customers can pay with WIC coupons and food stamps, and the market offers discounts for using them. In December 2009, the Food Project and DSNI came to an agreement that the unused greenhouse would be managed by the Food Project staff. Through its winter crops, the greenhouse is already increasing residents access to fresh and healthy foods.

More recently, local bakeries and cafés have become part of new healthy food options in Dudley. In the fall of 2005, the Haley Bakery Café, which is part of the nonprofit the Haley House, opened in the heart of Dudley Square. The Haley Bakery Café bakes, prepares, sells, and caters healthy and delicious food to clients. It is a very warm, beautiful, creative, and welcoming meeting space in the neighborhood. All of the waste and scrap from meals is composted and sent to The Food Project, which, in exchange, offers free produce to the Haley Bakery Café. The Haley House also prunes the trees planted by Earthworks and uses the apples for their baked goods in the Fall. In addition, the Haley House chef organizes healthy eating and cooking classes for at-risk kids through a partnership with local schools and a Roxbury police officer. Through the Take Back the Kitchen classes, kids learn to go beyond the negative preconceived opinions they might have about certain foods. As Didi works with and against their familiar and cultural relationships with food (Madden, 2005), she equips students with hands on culinary skills and health education to make healthful, sustainable food decisions and combat growing health disparities in the community. The Haley House also works in partnership with the Body by Brandy gym to incorporate Brandy's kids into its programs.

2.1.3.4 Recent projects around healthy and green housing

Environmental revitalization in Dudley is broad and comprehensive. In the past few years, healthy and green housing as well as green space development alongside buildings or inside housing complexes have been a recent focus of community engagement, and have been led by local CDCs. For instance, Dorchester Bay EDC has rallied forces with three other CDCs members of the Fairmount/Indigo Line CDC Collaborative to revitalize the MTBA commuter Fairmount Line. The coalition brings transit equity with cleaner fuel and spearheads transit-oriented development to build a sustainable community. The revitalization of the Fairmount Line includes civic organizing partners, such as Project Right, DSNI, Conservation Law Foundation, or ACE, among others. As part of this project, Dorchester Bay has recently completed the construction of 50 units of affordable rental housing and 6,260 square feet of commercial space

¹² For more information, see <http://thefoodproject.org/youth-programs>

¹³ Community Supported Agriculture originated in Japan 40 years ago where women started a system (called "teikei") of direct growing and purchasing from local farms. The term as Community-Supported Agriculture was first used in 1985 in the at Line Farm, MA. Today there are around 1,500 CSA farms in North America.

called Dudley Village. Residents cleaned up a lot and built a park and playground for the neighbors. The complex is a model of a green affordable rental property built to Energy Star II levels and featuring a photovoltaic array (Dorchester Bay EDC, 2011).

These new developments, along with the renovation of existing units (including weatherizing projects), involve a strong green job and energy efficiency components. Both ACE and DSNI are connecting their vision for just and sustainable development to broader climate mitigation policies. For instance, they advocate for energy efficiency upgrades, building retrofits, and weatherization programs for Roxbury. In ACE, the Dudley Square Organizing Project works to empower and organize residents about strategies to go green and lower energy bills by reducing energy consumption. ACE and DSNI are also working on bringing green jobs to Dudley, as part of the Kroc Center construction and green housing development.

Today, more than 650 parcels of vacant land have been cleaned up and redeveloped in Dudley's core area. Dudley is a welcoming part of Boston with kids riding their bikes around, youth rollerblading on Dudley common, music from different origins playing through the backyards, and adults jogging around. People are fixing up their houses, plant trees, and others relax in front of their houses or in parks. Together with outside forces, residents have achieved concrete gains: new community gardens, farms, infrastructure, playgrounds, community centers, parks, and green housing. Investment from foundations such as the Riley and Ford Foundation has proved crucial, and is greater in Dudley than in other Boston neighborhoods. Today, Dudley also benefits from the strong support of Mayor Menino, and this probably more than other marginalized parts of the city. In twenty years, poverty fell from 32.4% in 1989 to 27% in 2008. Employment decreased slightly from 16.3% in 1990 to 13.6% in 2008 (DSNI, 2008; Medoff & Sklar, 1994). In comparison to other low-income and minority neighborhoods in Boston such as Dorchester, Mattapan, or East Boston, the provision of environmental and social services in Dudley dotes its residents with a much improved quality of life and a wide variety of resources which other neighborhoods do not have. Dudley has definitely come back from a period of massive abandonment and destruction in the 1970s and 1980s, and is much more welcoming and livable than it used to be. Overall changes in the neighborhood landscape are dramatic.

That said, changes in some areas are still lagging behind. Socio-economic indicators have still to improve, and joblessness and poverty are still high in Dudley in comparison with wealthier neighborhoods such as Back Bay or Beacon Hill. Today, residents, community development corporations, and the City of Boston are putting much emphasis on business development in the area, especially as many small stores along Blue Hill Avenue and in Dudley Square have closed during the recent economic downturn affecting the country. For instance, the City of Boston released in March 2011 a road map for Dudley called the Dudley Map to build a new Boston Public School headquarter at the site of an old 135,000 square feet historic building called the Ferdinand building right in the center of Dudley Square. The new building will serve 56,000 students and parents closer to their home, offer youth-related programs, and welcome 350 BPS staff. It will become an anchor side at the intersection of Washington and Warren Streets, which is meant to attract further commercial and retail activity in Dudley. Commercial and retail will also be developed instead of the old police station in Dudley and the Dudley Library will be improved, making it a more welcoming asset in the community (City of Boston, 2011). A summary of the improvements and changes brought to the neighborhood, together with an

overview of remaining challenges is illustrated in Table 2 below.

DUDLEY		
Baseline Socio-Environmental Conditions	Neighborhood Changes	Remaining Challenges
<p>1,300 vacant lots in the mid-80s due to arson and abandonment</p> <p>54 hazardous waste sites with lead, chromium, mercury, asbestos, and petroleum constituents</p> <p>Child lead poisoning and lead contamination</p> <p>Groundwater contamination</p> <p>Illegal trash transfer stations</p> <p>Asthma hospitalization rates 5.5 times Massachusetts average</p> <p>Lack of parks and recreational facilities</p> <p>Food desert</p> <p>2001: Heart diseases as second leading cause of death for Roxbury residents and obesity as first key health issue</p> <p>1990s: 50% of children below poverty line</p> <p>Crack epidemic in the 1980s</p>	<p><u>Summary:</u> 650 lots cleaned and redevelopment. 400 high quality affordable houses, town common, community greenhouse, parks, playgrounds, gardens, community orchard, community centers, new schools, and other public spaces redeveloped or built.</p> <p>Closing of two illegal trash transfer stations and conversion of one of them into a sustainable and safe business</p> <p>Victory in three legal cases in Dudley: A trash dumping and chemical storage on four properties, an illegal trash transfer stations, and a local business dumping noxious liquids into a storm drain</p> <p>Extensive brownfield redevelopment</p> <p>Lead poisoning prevention projects with education campaign, lead testing, lead abatement strategies, compost distribution, crop selection, and raised beds to achieve safe gardening practices, with positive results in at least 160 gardens</p> <p>Improvement in clean public transportation with the revitalization of the Fairmount MBTA line and the conversion of diesel buses into a cleaner fleet.</p> <p>Construction of new parks and green spaces and rehabilitation of abandoned ones (i.e., Dudley Town Common, Dennis Street Park, Mary Hannon Park).</p> <p>Creation of three urban farms producing 250,000 pounds of chemical-pesticide-free food, one green house community orchard, a demonstration and education farm (on the side of the Shirley Eustis house), 16 community gardens, one farmers' market, one locally-owned grocery, and a healthy bakery and café</p> <p>Creation of three new schoolyards and outdoor classrooms at the Dearborn, the Emerson, and the Mason schools</p> <p>Green projects by neighborhood associations (i.e., rain barrels, composting, raised beds</p> <p>New community centers and multi-purpose facilities (i.e., Kroc Center, Vine Street, Orchard Gardens, Grove Hall Community Center) and community gym (Body by Brandy)</p> <p>Construction of at least 7 new tot lots and playgrounds (i.e. Eustis Street playground, Winthrop Playground)</p> <p>Building of new green housing (i.e. Dudley Village: 50 units of affordable green rental housing with a community park and playground) and weatherizing projects</p> <p>Decrease of poverty from 32.4% in 1989 to 27% in 2008</p> <p>Decrease of unemployment from 16.3% in 1990 to 13.6% in 2008</p> <p>Decrease in crime rates (-10% in Roxbury as a whole between 2004 and 2008 and -13% in Dorchester)</p>	<p>High poverty rates are still 27% in 2008 against 20% in Boston as a whole</p> <p>Median household income in 2009 was \$33,300 against 56,000 in Boston as a whole</p> <p>Employment rate is still 13.6% in 2008</p> <p>Only 25% of housing is owner-occupied as compared to 32% in Boston as a whole</p> <p>Roxbury as a whole still had 3,318 incidents of violent crime in 2007 (the second highest in Boston) and 17 murders (the highest rate in the city).</p> <p>34% of residents have less than a high school degree against 20% in Boston as a whole</p> <p>Children asthma hospitalization rate in Roxbury 59% higher in 2006 than Boston rate for children under 5.</p>

Table 2: Baseline socio-environmental conditions, neighborhood changes, and remaining challenges in Dudley

Sources of information: City of Boston, Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Police Department, city-data.com, DSNI, Project Right, ACE, The Food Project, BNAN, Haley House, Shirley Eustis House

In sum, despite the remaining economic and social hardship faced by residents, a tight web of leaders and organizations have spearheaded environmental efforts in Dudley and turned the neighborhood around. Their efforts illustrate the close relationship between environmental justice and community development.

2.2 Unequal development coupled with neighborhood fights for environmental improvements in the Casc Antic, Barcelona

2.2.1 Early periods of exclusion and marginalization in the Casc Antic

2.2.1.1 From affluence to decline: Barcelona under Franco

While Franco's dictatorship was ruling Spain (1939-1975), Barcelona became a core industrial center in Spain, with the establishment of new industries in Les Corts, Poble Nou, or Zona Franca areas, among others. In the 1950s, rapid urbanization was accompanied by the construction of motorways, second home ownership, and search for higher life quality (Capel, 2005). Barcelona also benefited from the development of a chemical and oil complex in Tarragona – which was close enough to support the city's development while not compromising the city's image (Marshall, 2004). Most of the population increase in Barcelona was concentrated in Ciutat Vella, which was being abandoned by middle and upper class residents in search of less dense living conditions. These choices followed the ideas of planner Ildefons Cerdà who conceived the city extension in the grid-planned Eixample district around public spaces and greenery, new spacious and healthy buildings, continuity of urban axes, and diversity and social mixity -- away from the congested and insalubrious old town (Paz 2003).¹⁴

The exodus of those residents facilitated the process of incorporation of newcomers from agricultural parts of Spain – Valencia, Murcia, and Aragon – attracted by the job opportunities and cheaper rents. As residents from those regions increased their economic power, they also moved to other parts of the city in the 1960s, and left space for newcomers from other regions in Spain – Castilla, Asturias, Andalucia, Extremadura, Navarrago, Aragon and Leon – in Casc Antic (Sánchez, 1986). Between 1950 and 1975, seven million of Spanish workers and their families migrated from the Northwestern and Southern regions of Asturias, Galicia, Murcia, or Andalucia to Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao, or even Northern Europe.

¹⁴ Cerdà is often considered as one of the first modern urban planner. Most of his career was focused on implementing the expansion of the city, by following a utopian socialist vision. His plan for Barcelona in 1857 remained the official city plan until 1953. His plan has been often praised for its futuristic vision of accommodating the commercial, social, and representational needs of the newly enriched residents, but also criticized for serving as a base to the destruction of many old buildings in Ciutat Vella as the third and last city wall was taken down, as well as the exodus of middle class residents away from the city center.

While the most active and young residents left Casc Antic, older residents and migrants without easy job marketability and with lower educational skills remained in the old town. The percentage of working-class residents in the neighborhood was 8% higher than in Barcelona in 1970 and 16% higher in 1980 (Sánchez, 1986). New residents arrived in precarious conditions, had no formal houses to live in, only low-paid and insecure jobs at best and lived without services. Franco's policies also led to the neglect and degradation of housing, equipment, environmental, and service infrastructures in the city center. By the 1970s, the public perception of the old town was that it was a prostitution-ridden area, drug traffic zone, and crime (Abella, 2004). Most residents avoided Ciutat Vella, and Casc Antic became a shadow of its glorious, animated, commercial-active past. It was an infected and unwelcoming area.

By the end of Francos' regime in 1975, the construction of additional floors on the roofs of buildings in the Casc Antic, the maximum exploitation of all available spaces (interior courtyards, terraces, and sheds transformed into housing) led to the creation of a "vertical shantytown" (Monnet, 2002). To earn additional income from newcomers, landlords opted for the subdivision of flats, thus increasing overcrowding and life in unhealthy conditions, without keeping properties up and ensuring that tenants had access to decent sanitation, safety, and space. In 1981, 13.5% of the buildings did not have a full bath, 85% running water, and 50% were declared in need of urgent rehabilitation (Abella, 2004). In 1975, the old town reached a level of 833 residents per hectare and buildings were crumbling (Abella, 2004). Coupled with these years of neglect, public authorities did not make the necessary investments to maintain infrastructure, build new equipments, and provide adequate services. With also an obvious lack of green areas and public space – the Casc Antic looked asphyxiated. It was humid and cold in the winter, suffocating and smelly in the summer, and dirty at all times.

2.2.1.2 Development and excesses in Barcelona: 1975 to the Post-Olympic game era

After Franco's death in 1975 and after a few years of public debate, the City of Barcelona decided to put a strong emphasis on the revitalization of public spaces and the construction of public equipments, taking advantage of the city's qualities and traditions and existing empty spaces (Montaner, 2004). It was a period of strong social and cultural dynamism, which came out of the transition to democracy and found great support in the 1979 Catalan Status of Autonomy.

The strategy of revitalizing Barcelona's neglected neighborhoods included five different objectives: Responding to social demands for improvements and developing social uses of revitalized spaces, promoting the multi-functionality of spaces through reconversion of projects to new uses (i.e. the Olympic Village for the 1992 games), fostering a transformational dynamic for a whole area (i.e. the revitalization of the port and the waterfront), creating new monumental designs and increasing the cultural and architectural visibility of the city, and improving the image of Barcelona through marketing of its touristic, cultural, and recreational attractions (Borja, 2004). Between 1975 and the Olympic games of 1992, Barcelona underwent a radical transformation from a "Catalan Manchester" to a dynamic city with a different economic base, social composition, physical structure, population's habits, and image as a whole (Nello, 2004).

The redevelopment of Barcelona took place in four different stages. Until the first half of the 1980s, projects capitalized on the new democratic city, applied the urban models developed in the Escuela de Arquitectura de Barcelona, and worked closely with local economists and

infrastructure specialists (Marshall, 2004). Much attention was given to social needs. In addition, public works included the renovation of plazas in the old town or Gracia, parks such as the Parque de la España Industrial, or the creation of civic centers. A total of 150 projects for transforming the quality of public spaces took place during the 1980s with the idea of promoting the “Barcelona dels Barris” – the Barcelona of Neighborhoods – (Capel, 2005). The second period for urban projects initiated in 1986 when Barcelona was awarded the organization of the Olympic games for 1992. Such a pivotal project allowed for massive investment in Barcelona and for great international attraction. With the leadership from Mayor Maragall, the Olympic Village was created, the mountain of Montjuic received new sports and recreational installations, and the waterfront and port were completely sanitized and rebuilt for leisure. However, the scale of the dialogue changed at that time with direct negotiations between developers and the Municipality and without a consensus with civic and social movements (Montaner, 2004).

During the third period – the post-Olympic game era, – the Municipality chose to center its attention on finishing existing public works and improving the international position of the goods and services produced inside Barcelona. Campaigns boosted Barcelona as the city of trade fairs and congresses, leader in higher education, avant-garde medical center, and design center. The idea was to promote “Barcelona more than ever” (Borja, Castells, Belil, Benner, & United Nations Centre for Human Settlements., 1997). In a fourth period, at the end of the 1990s, the Municipality decided to capitalize on the attention it received after the games and launch “Barcelona New Projects,” – more technocratic, rationalist, and speculative projects reflecting the urban form of American suburbs and coexisting awkwardly with more progressive transportation and sustainability projects (Montaner, 2004). Diagonal Mar, for instance, represents the Spanish attempt of constructing a gated park and community of 8 tall skyscrapers, a convention center, a large-scale shopping mall, and a hotel in lieu of an old industrial district. It creates an urban layout in rupture with the configuration of the rest of the waterfront. The idea of a private park enters in total contradiction with a city proud of its tight urban fabric, small streets, and squares. In the Casc Antic, such a mentality was reflected in the destruction of the neoclassic Santa Catarina market in 2001 and modern reconstruction, which is criticized for its lack of respect for the rhythm of composition of the built environment.

Several urban plans have supported development projects and given them coherence, structure, and legitimacy: the *Plan General Metropolitano* (PGM), which authorized the conversion of industrial buildings and degraded infrastructure into collective equipments and public spaces, the *Planes Especiales de Reforma Interior* (PERI) as comprehensive urban plans, and decentralization which allowed for citizen’s urbanism and concerted decisions with social organizations and professionals on priority project (Borja, 2004). These projects were later integrated in the 1988, 1994, and 1998 *Plan Estratégico de Barcelona*, but after many of them had already been in the process of execution. The plan sets economic, social, and cultural goals for urban policies within the European framework and the context of globalization (Borja, 2004).

All major urban developments have a darker side to them and tend to bring in social and environmental impacts – and Barcelona is no exception. The new wave of highly controversial projects, which are comparable to urban renewal projects in the US, have raised doubts about the capacity of Barcelona to remain a modern, just, and welcoming city. In many cases, the PERIs have been accused of neglecting the social and economic structure of the areas being transformed (Alfama, Casademunt, Coll-Planas, Cruz, & Martí, 2007; Borja, 2004; Calavita & Ferrer, 2004;

Capel, 2005; D'Esribes, 2004; Delgado, 2007; Lahuerta, 2005; Leiva, Miró Ivan, & Urbano, 2007; Mas & Verger, 2004; Montaner, 2004; Unió Temporal, 2004; V.I.U, 2006). The dynamism of the city has raised the price of land and real estate in Barcelona tremendously and pushed away many working class residents in the Casc Antic in favor of wealthier and younger newcomers. It has attracted millions of tourists who come to enjoy its cultural and recreational offerings, its beaches and tapas bars, and, in turn, decrease livability for its traditional populations in the neighborhood.

Last, the Casc Antic area of Barcelona suffered from the destruction of many historic buildings. In 1988, the City created PROCIVESA (Promoció Ciutat Vella S.A), a company with 61% of public funds and 39% of private capital, to sanitize and revitalize the old town. The rehabilitation of the Cathedral areas and other historical monuments in Ciutat Vella was done well, but many older buildings in the Casc Antic were erased from the map, which affected the identity of the city, the construction of the historic memory, and the preservation of traditional landscapes and social fabric (Capel, 2005). Further, the construction of new housing in the Casc Antic was mirrored by the destruction of working class housing from the XIXth and XXth century, much of it with a strong patrimonial and historical value, and inhabited by a large number of humble families. Even as many architects and developers attempted to improve the quality of the housing stock, promote new business areas, and create new public spaces in Ciutat Vella, their projects destroyed old buildings in a non-discriminatory way, and expelled residents, and this with the support of local politicians and technicians (Capel, 2005).

In sum, architecture has overpowered urbanism, and formal urbanism and private developers have imposed their views on the contents of the space and its social uses (Borja, 2004). Barcelona has become a large metropolis with services and shops mostly for transient populations (Montaner, 2004). By the end of the 1990s, Barcelona was viewed as a city only suitable for rich residents, including tourists, rather than for ordinary citizens (Marshall, 2004). Today, urbanism is not based on the existing urban fabric, but on a collage of successive opaque actions on a territory. For critics, there is no homogeneity, coherence, nor territorial balance (Montaner, 2004). Barcelona is also seen as a metropolis converted in an enormous chain of dream and pretences production, whose own self-lie is its main industry and whose residents are transformed into workers-prisoners (Delgado, 2007). As such, the Casc Antic embodies these contradictions, uneven transformations, and patterns of marginalization.

2.2.2 Acute social and environmental impacts for Casc Antic

2.2.2.1 An urban revival with high costs

Degradation, unequal revitalization, and marginalization in the Casc Antic is a process that unraveled in three stages: Decades of neglect, upper class flight, and abandonment of the whole neighborhood by city officials between the first part of the XXth century until the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975; public reinvestment, unequal transformation, large number of forced expropriations and further voluntary abandonment of buildings and streets from the return of democracy until the mid 1990s; and finally a counter-movement of civic engagement in fighting against the non-selective destruction of parts of the Casc Antic, real-estate speculation and social exclusion, and lack of real improvement in environmental conditions.

By the 1990s, the cleansing of old, degraded, and semi-abandoned buildings meant that many newly built and high-end apartments were not affordable any more for former residents (Delgado, 2007). This was especially true in a small area of Casc Antic – the Ribera – in which gentrification is acute, as illustrated by trendy cafés, luxury clothing stores, and expensive art galleries. Today, in some streets, the purchasing price of a home is twenty times the mean annual income per capita – against fifteen times in 1991 (Tello, 2004). Ciutat Vella is the most expensive district for housing rentals in the city with prices reaching 15.6 Euros per square meter against 13.1% for Barcelona as a whole in 2007 (Idealista, 2007). While the City of Barcelona built social housing in Casc Antic after being pushed by neighborhood associations and other social organizations, many of the former older and vulnerable residents from the neighborhood had to leave. During the process of urban revitalization in the Casc Antic, 2,000 residents were displaced and 1,078 buildings destroyed (Mas & Verger, 2004).

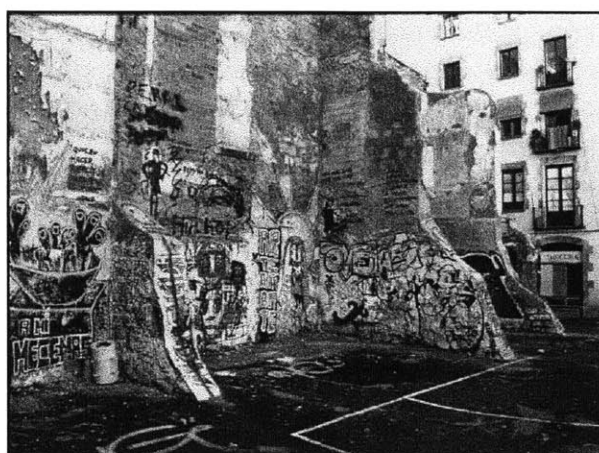
Reviving the Casc Antic involved specific measures to maximize the use of space, which brought with them acute environmental degradation: a change in building norms with more floors authorized per building, the decrease in apartment size, the transformation of formerly obsolete areas, and a phenomenon of “urban acupuncture”, involving what residents know as *mobbing* – harassment of tenants (Unió Temporal, 2004). This mobbing took several forms: threats towards tenants to force them to leave without claiming expropriation rights; an end to rent collection and the absence of information to tenants when landlords changed; the active or passive degradation of buildings and apartments and the participation in the active deterioration of the neighborhood; the offer of monetary compensation to the tenants as long as they left the apartment; and the reconstruction of buildings with the goal of increasing their value. According to a resident, emptying the buildings of residents was called “eliminating the insects” (Gottardi, 2007). Buildings were then left abandoned, full of debris, unsafe structures, and rats crawling.

Despite those evictions and the environmental and health issues they were confronted with, many traditional residents fought to stay in the neighborhood. At the end of the 1990s, two main areas of the Casc Antic – Sant Pere and Santa Catarina – were still inhabited by lower-income residents, mostly elderly residents – 30% of the residents were over 60 years old – and new-comers from Latin America and Africa who had resisted mobbing, had been re-housed in the few public housing buildings, or who had accepted substandard and unsanitary conditions in exchange for an affordable place. Their situation revealed that the new urban projects promoted by the City of Barcelona had been unable to tackle housing needs for residents confronted with high mortgages or rents. Up to the mid-1990s, a high level of illicit activities still occurred daily in San Pere and Santa Catarina, which had contributed to the development of a negative image towards the Casc Antic and of stigmas against immigrants.

Consequently, the state of remaining buildings in the Casc Antic was in worse conditions than the rest of Barcelona– with only 58% of the buildings considered in adequate state of conservation in 2001 against 80% in the other neighborhoods. In 2001, 175 buildings were still in bad shape, including 35 of them in ruins (75% of them being located in Santa Catarina) (Martí'n, 2007). Furthermore, in the mid-1990s, residents still lacked core infrastructure and many buildings were still receiving water through rooftop water deposits with a capacity of 100 to 500 liters – the entire water allowance for the day (Abella, 2004). Many water deposits leaked, creating structural damage to buildings and substandard sanitation conditions (Martí'n, 2007). Buildings were not structurally safe and required extensive repair and maintenance. Waste

collection and management was substandard, with a difficult access for the trash collectors to the small streets of the Casc Antic, which left an impression of constant neglect and filth.

In addition, the process of re-generating the area and the destruction of entire blocks of old buildings produced landscapes that reminded visitors of the landscapes of Barcelona during the Civil War (1936-1939) (Delgado, 2007). Once buildings were taken down, their debris often remained onsite and accumulated in front of residents' houses for months and years. In the place of buildings, visitors and residents dumped any solid or liquid waste. Residents had to suffer from constant noise and trash accumulation. Summers were suffocating and smelly, and winters still dark and humid. Residents had no place to take a stroll or relax. In comparison with other neighborhoods, Casc Antic – and Santa Catarina and Sant Pere in particular – suffered from extensive delay in the creation of green areas, which triggered the exasperation of residents and the Casc Antic Neighbors' Association (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2005).



Photos: Empty lots and debris in the 1990s in Casc Antic (photo: Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella)

2.2.2.2 Negative health and environmental impacts on residents

As a result, the health outcomes of Casc Antic residents were inferior in comparison to those of Barcelona as a whole and to those of other neighborhoods. Ciutat Vella was the district with the lowest life expectancy in the city and the highest infant mortality (in 2002, it was five times higher than in the rest of Barcelona). A majority of residents in the Casc Antic lived in substandard conditions in over-occupied apartments and without the proper access to a decent outside environment and good health. High drug consumption was also a cause of health issues in the Casc Antic with a rate of death by overdoses superior to other parts of the city and to other parts of the old town (11.5/1,000 inhabitants for individuals between 16 and 49 years old), with strong consumption of cocaine and heroin. Due to the high number of fragile immigrant groups and elderly populations, health centers and consults were in high demand in the neighborhood (Martí'n, 2007), and often overcrowded with patients suffering from respiratory disease or complaining of air, noise, and ground contamination.

Last, in the 1990s, youth have fewer opportunities to practice sports and physical activity in the Casc Antic in comparison with other districts. The urban structure of the Casc Antic and the existing center were limiting factors and led to numerous complaints by the neighbors. Kids

were playing in busy streets or small plazas, which limited their capacity to take part in structured and pedagogical activities through local organizations. Much of their recreational and sports activities occurred in the middle of crumbling buildings, streets with trash and rubbish, or construction zones – all temporary areas deprived of a sense of stability and comfort that kids needed – which was limiting their development and the construction of positive attitudes towards the neighborhood and its environment (Martí'n, 2007).

In sum, residents in the Casc Antic seen their neighborhood becoming slowly transformed as part of a broader revitalization push in Barcelona, but also negatively affected by a worsening in environmental conditions and in the quality of public spaces, and by unsafe and unhealthy housing conditions. However, despite these adverse circumstances, residents, community groups, and historic preservation organizations took the lead in the 1990s to improve the environmental quality in Sant Pere and Santa Catalina.

2.2.3 Fights and advocacy for environmental improvements in the Casc Antic

2.2.3.1 Early spontaneous community-led environmental projects

The transition to democracy initiated in Spain in 1975 opened up the way for new civic associations to frame social claims and propose plans for additional urban equipments in Ciutat Vella (Capel, 2005; Hoche, 2005). Between 1970 and 1975, the dictatorship repression had weakened to a certain extent thanks to the mobilization of workers, students, and planners, in addition to the organization of more grassroot and de-politicized urban social movements (Calavita & Ferrer, 2004; Castells, 1983). Catalanian architects were key drivers of new urban project planning. Neighbors' Associations – Asociaciones de Veins, – which had quietly formed at the end of Franco's regime, – also played a central role as intellectual minds of projects and defenders of the rights of residents or social groups. This left-leaning civil society demanded new equipments, structural and sanitation improvements in buildings, public spaces, adequate waste management, revitalization of old degraded neighborhoods, and better urban quality for poorer neighborhoods, and Ciutat Vella in particular (Borja, 2004). In 1975, political and technical leaders from the Associació de Veins del Casc Antic – the Casc Antic Neighborhood Association – took key positions as urban managers and planners and started implementing the revitalization of Barcelona's neighborhoods, (Capel, 2005). In addition to this formal process, residents organized strong social mobilizations during the first years of the democracy.

Yet, this period of intense debate and urban transformations also produced deep disenchantment among the civil society. Some of the members of the Casc Antic Neighbors' Association were particularly vehement against the destruction of buildings and displacement of people already occurring at the end of the 1980s. By the middle of the 1990s, citizen movements were openly questioning the Barcelona model of urban revitalization, criticizing excessive tourism, the conversion of the city into a thematic park, real estate speculation, and deficient social and urban infrastructure (Capel, 2007). In the Casc Antic, an intense and multifaceted conflict between residents, their supporters and the City of Barcelona emerged at the end of the 1990s. In 1995, buildings had already been taken down in the old town, and, in December 1997, PROVICESA – the public-private company in charge of the old town remodeling – began expropriating residents. In 1999, PROVICESA directed its attention to apartment buildings in the Sant Pere and Santa Catalina areas of the neighborhood, and proceeded to demolish the flats with

the plan of building a new car parking and high-end apartments in place of the old buildings (Melo, 2006). Such a plan meant to promote the use of cars in a neighborhood with tight streets, which was very remote from the daily needs of the population (Àngels Alió & Jori, 2010)

Upon the destruction of buildings, city contractors left large amounts of rubbish and waste behind. This abandonment lasted for almost two years until residents decided in December 2000 to plant a Christmas tree in the middle of the huge space – 6,500 m², which they baptized “Forat de la Vergonya”, the Hole of Shame in Catalan. In this act of urban guerilla gardening, they aimed at calling the City of Barcelona’s attention so that it would recognize their abandonment and the need for green space in the Casc Antic. A key point in the conflict is that the 1983 PERI – Special Plan for Interior Reform – had assigned a green space to this area, but the municipality later changed its land use so that the parking could be built. The planting of the tree on the Forat in 2000 was only the beginning of a long fight between residents, policy-makers, and the police. A few months later, groups of squatters came to occupy the empty buildings around the Forat to prevent further destruction and support the residents in their efforts to rebuild the space (Melo, 2006). Within a few weeks, residents and their supporters transformed the Forat into a community garden, a green space, and large plaza with playgrounds, soccer and basketball fields, and benches and tables -- and all of with their own resources.



Photos: Auto-construction of playgrounds and gardens around the Forat de la Vergonya (Photo Credit: Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella)

Shortly after their construction, the new spaces on the Forat and in the nearby buildings became innovative social and environmental focus points in the neighborhood: bike-repair workshops emerged, events around social documentaries got organized, legal advice offered to immigrants, community cleanup events coordinated, and social activities and festivals planned. For instance, residents regularly organized soccer tournaments followed by a giant paella party with traditional music and batuka drumming. It was a multicultural and multigenerational place of encounter and exchanges (Àngels Alió & Jori, 2010). In addition, neighbors used these encounters to discuss and channel their collective claims to the municipality (Melo, 2006). The Forat evolved as a self-managed area and a collective reflection space. In 2002, for example, several social and environmental demonstrations took place in the Forat and extended to the

whole Ciutat Vella district. They were centered on the fight against the destruction of buildings, in favor of a permanent green zone in the Forat and of more green space in the Ciutat Vella.

In the midst of the spontaneous revitalization of the Forat, police forces stormed the area on November 19th 2002 to empty the space and get rid of the neighbors' gardens, playgrounds, and green spaces and prepare the field for the parking construction. Their intervention also included the construction of a brick wall to prevent people from accessing the area. However, a few days later, on November 29th, 2002, the Barcelona Neighbor Platform against Speculation announced a support demonstration, which ended with the fall of the wall. After this demonstration, the neighbors re-took control of the Forat and continued to maintain their gardens and playgrounds, and organize social events and protests. Their actions benefited from a wide variety of supporters: historical preservation groups (Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella), social organizations (RAI), social architects (Arquitectos sin Frontera), artists and film-makers (Chema Falconetti), presses and publishing companies (ICARIA), and academics. As a result of this broad mobilization, at the end of 2003, upon the results of the municipal elections, Carlos Marti, the new Ciutat Vella manager, announced that the plan to build a parking would be cancelled and that the proposals of the neighbors taken into account by the municipality.

2.2.3.2 Permanent environmental reconstruction and new resident endeavors in the Forat

At the beginning of 2005, the City of Barcelona announced the organization of a participatory dialogue to plan the future of the Forat. The participatory process was not exempt of controversies, divisions, and conflicts. On October 13th, 2005, the municipality led a first informative meeting regarding the future of the area and the construction of a new park. This process was welcomed very skeptically by many of the neighbors who did not want to see their space taken over and revamped, and who claimed that not all groups and associations of the neighborhood were represented in the dialogue. They considered that there was no real participatory methodology, that the calendar for planning the new space (less than four months) was tight, with meetings organized during working hours for residents, and that the rules were not based on consensus. During that time, the privileged interlocutor of the municipality was actually the PICA, a new group of local organizations incorporated in 1997 and whose existence is directly dependent on grants from the municipality (Abella, 2004; Arquisocial, 2006; Moviments.Net, 2008). For the Forat neighbors and their supporters, who had coalesced around a new platform called Espai d'Entesa, the dialogue was a façade (Moviments.Net, 2008).

In the meantime, the Forat neighbors continued to manage the space and organize activities around it: protests against speculation, meetings to "rethink Barcelona," and parties around the planting of new trees donated by Sicilian mayors. However, on October 4th 2006, the municipality ordered a second police occupation of the Forat to initiate the construction of a new park according to the agreement that came out of the participatory process. Until January 2007, policemen repressed anyone who tried to access the Forat (Moviments.Net, 2008). In February 2007, as a sign of protest, the initial organizers of the gardens and installations moved their trees and equipment out of the area. In the end, however, despite the recurring disagreements and conflicts between the municipality and the neighbors' groups, the Forat rehabilitation took into consideration most of the wishes of the residents and their supporters. The municipality built an area – renamed Pou de la Figuera – with trees and plants, benches and fountains, kids' playgrounds, a soccer and basketball field, and a space for community gardens.

In addition to the creation of a new large environmental area in the Casc Antic, residents managed to obtain the construction of a community center called the Equipament of the Pou de la Figuera. The Equipament puts a special emphasis on events meant to strengthen the community, promote the expression and dialogue of cultures, generations, and social realities of the neighborhood. Much importance is also assigned to activities directed to the resolution of neighborhood problems, those sharing the history of the neighborhood (Ortega, 2008), and dance and physical activity workshop for the residents. The construction of the Pou also included the renovation of water, light, phone, gas, sewage, and public lighting networks and infrastructure in the area, for 2.8 million Euros (Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006).

A series of new environmental initiatives have emerged from the new Pou de la Figuera. A group of residents formerly involved with the Forat fights together with other residents have created a new self-managed and self-constructed community garden called l'Hortet del Forat. Every week volunteer participants get together to plant and maintain crops in the garden, which include a variety of Mediterranean vegetables and spices. Assemblies take place every month to plan each planting, maintenance, and harvest. To sustain the proper maintenance of the garden, the organizers have applied to a small yearly grant given by a new local community center – the *Convent de San Agusti*. Gardeners also get free seeds from local farms at each beginning of a new season and receive products from the Xarxa de Consum Solidari – a local network based in the Casc Antic developing Community Shared Agriculture and ethical trade.



Photos: New community garden in the Casc Antic – l'Hortet del Forat (left) and environmental education workshops around a neighborhood party in the Casc Antic (right)

In addition to gardening activities, volunteers organize educational workshops for local kids and youth around environmental sustainability, plant ecology, composting, recycling, and planting to encourage positive environmental behavior in the Casc Antic. They invite local schools to participate in the garden activities, as well as after-school programs. Volunteers also prepare social events around the harvest from the garden. For instance, they organize a giant paella, couscous, or calçotada (a catalan dish based on local onions) festival a few times a year for the whole neighborhood, which is based on the cultural culinary traditions of the residents. Their social events are assorted with cultural groups playing music or with stand-up comedians and sports competitions on the new basketball and soccer grounds. They also invite speakers to

address broader social and political issues in Barcelona and the world (i.e. on food security) and organize artistic manual works for kids around recycling. Last, the volunteers have created an Exchange Market (Mercat de Intercambi) to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, objects, capacities, and services between neighbors, such as personal trainers, dance classes, nutrition.

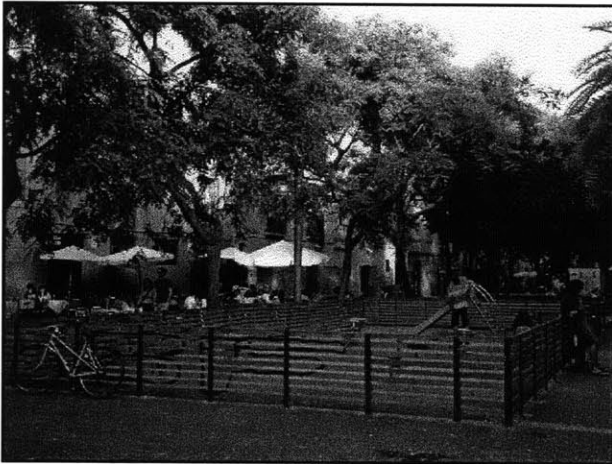
The development of the garden is closely coupled with the work of local environmental groups fighting for local sustainable food production, and working for fragile immigrant populations in the Casc Antic. For instance, Mescladis, a project from the Fundació Ciutadania Multicultural, offers cooking lessons to educate participants on multiculturalism, develop a space for encounter and sharing, and to train and integrate women in the labor workforce through cooking and catering training. Through the workshops *Cuinar es un Joc* (Cooking is a game), Mescladis offers cooking classes to 250 kids in the Casc Antic to create healthy eating habits while emphasizing respect to diversity, solidarity, cooperation, and social commitment. Much emphasis is also put on intergenerational sharing and learning through cooking classes led by elderly residents and involving young kids.

2.2.3.3 Improvements in green and public space, waste management, and healthy housing

The creation of the Pou de la Figuera gardens, playgrounds, and green areas as well as the construction of the Equipament community center were made possible by a new Catalan law – Lei de Barris 2/2004. This law is seen as the logical outcome of years of demands from the residents and community organizations in the Casc Antic, and allows them to present projects to the City. This law marked the start of a new comprehensive revitalization program with a cost of 14.6 million Euros in the Santa Catarina and Sant Pere sections of the Casc Antic (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2004; Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006). It was based on the recognition that the area was still lacking green and public spaces, equipments, improvements in existing buildings, and a creation of a modern waste collection system. The Lei de Barris has resulted in a series of environmental improvements in the Casc Antic from 2005 until today for a total amount of 2.04 million Euros of investment in public space and green area, 1.5 million Euros in building rehabilitation and sanitation, 9.6 million in collective equipment, and 460,000 Euros in improved waste management (Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006). As mentioned above, the Pou de la Figuera was built, as well as a new community center called El Convent de San Agusti. In the center, youth groups organize cultural activities and educational workshops, and just quietly enjoy a gathering space in the restaurant that of the Convent. In such a dense area of the city, the Convent is also a peaceful and refreshing place for families and kids to relax. Since its creation, youth from the Casc Antic have been using the large convent courtyard as a playing space for kids to play kickball.

In addition to the greening of the Pou de la Figura, the City has accepted to build a series of small green spaces throughout Sant Pere and Santa Catarina to improve public spaces and eliminate focal points of waste accumulation and neglect in streets such as Carrer Flassaders, Carrer Forn de la Fonda. The project was born out of the proposal from the PICA network of community organizations (Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006), and especially the lobbying from the environmental NGO GENAB.

Furthermore, a large plaza (2,520 m²) – called Allada Vermell, which was built at the time of the Olympic games, was recently rebuilt upon residents complaints regarding the lack of functionality of the space and the impression of a long street rather than an plaza with a pleasant green space. As a result, the municipality built a new playground for kids, relocated and added benches and picnic tables, redid the pavement to improve access to kids and elderly residents and rain water evacuation, protected existing trees, and added parking for bikes (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2009). This renovation allowed for a different use and enjoyment of the public space by the neighbors.



Photos: New kids playgrounds (Allada Vermell – left and Pou de la Figuera – right)

Much effort was also dedicated recently to waste management. In 2005 the municipality built a pneumatic waste system which moves the waste from several dispatch points to a collection point underground under the Santa Catarina Market. This new 370,000 Euros system has improved the state of hygiene and sanitation by eliminating above-ground waste containers (Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006). During the planning phase, community groups and organizations such as Espai d'Entesa, the Veïns en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella, and Architects Without Borders provided technical advice to the municipality on the most appropriate points of dispatch through the the Casc Antic. In the domain of solid waste recycling, environmental organizations such as the GENAB and the Neighbors' Association successfully advocated for the creation of a mini-recycling center – Punt Verd – in the neighborhood, where neighbors can now bring recyclable waste, rather than leaving it lying

on the streets or in back patios (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2005). In addition the GENAB has been organizing campaigns among residents to teach them about recycling practices and improved waste management.

Last, the City of Barcelona has dedicated part of its budget to housing structural and sanitation improvement as well as to green housing projects, mostly as a response to the demands from the GENAB (the environmental NGO in the Casc Antic) and advocacy from community organizations such as the Neighbors' Association. A one and half million Euros of public investment has targeted a variety of improvements: the rehabilitation of buildings throughout Santa Catarina and Sant Pere, the substitution of old water deposits, the repair to the deficient lead pipes and sewer systems, as well as the construction of direct water networks in buildings, and the installation of solar panels for warm water (Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006). Some of these improvements were done directly by the municipality and others through grants to the owners of the flats. Local cooperatives, which emerged out of the neighbor's movement in Barcelona, have taken charge of building new healthy public housing in the Casc Antic to respond to social and environmental needs in the neighborhood.

2.2.3.4 The enhancement of opportunities for sports and physical activity

For years, the Casc Antic offered poor options for sports and physical activity. As a result, during the past decade, the Associació de Veïns del Casc Antic and other community groups formed around sports (i.e., AECCA) lobbied the municipality for a multipurpose sports facility. Between 2002 and 2005 they received the support from local organizations rallying against the fact that the Casc Antic was the only neighborhood in the old town without a sports center. The municipality took a while to respond, but after two years of work, the Centro de Esportiu Municipal of San Pere y Santa Catarina was inaugurated in February 2010. The new facility covers 4,300 m² with two swimming pools, a multisports room, and three multiuse rooms for cardio, gym and fitness classes (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2010).



Photos: New sports center (Photo credit: Ayuntamiento de Barcelona)

Coupled with this new sports facility, groups of neighbors and community organizations have developed sports leagues and activities for at-risk youth groups. For instance, a group of women created AECCA – Associació Esportiva Cervantes Casc Antic – to develop basketball leagues in the neighborhood using the equipments of the local schools after hours. They bring

together adolescents, train them, and educate them with social values and multicultural understanding while fighting against a lack of physical activity and increased risk of obesity. Other organizations such as Fundació Adsis and Fundació Comtal also work with adolescents to provide them with afterschool programs that include the organization of soccer, volleyball, basketball training and tournaments. These initiatives attempt to strengthen the comprehensive development of young adolescents while offering psychological support to participants and improving the quality and availability of sports infrastructure in the neighborhood.

In sum, residents and a broad variety of supporters and networks around them have defended and framed an activist-based vision for environmental and health improvements in the Casc Antic. Their mobilization came as a response to drastic environmental and social impacts resulting from unequal city-led revitalization in the area in the 1908s and 1990s. More than in Boston, their fights encountered strong resistance from public officials and police forces, but have also eventually gathered municipal support and strong city and state funding. As a result, they produced greater urban sustainability and social equity for residents and are in line with broader community development for the neighborhood. Today, Casc Antic is the only neighborhood in Barcelona with a self-managed multi-purpose community center and community garden, as well as green spaces and playgrounds based on residents' claims and initial efforts. The proportion of affordable or public housing in the areas of San Pere and Santa Catalina is higher than any other neighborhood in the old town and, despite the presence of high rents in neighboring areas, residents have managed to remain in the neighborhood. There is still a large proportion of traditional retail and commercial activity in those areas while others parts of the old town have become more gentrified.

That said, a few challenges remain in the Casc Antic. The risk of gentrification is definitely present in the neighborhood and affordability of housing and fresh food will be important issues in the future. The renovation of the Santa Catalina market has increased the price of food at the market, which forces low-income residents to shop in less pricey stores or at the Boqueria Market (in another part of the old town). Some streets and buildings remain in poor conditions and require structural and sanitation improvements. Many immigrant families live in substandard conditions in over-crowded buildings. If violent crime and prostitution have been eradicated, drug consumption and trafficking in some parts of the neighborhood are still present. A summary of the improvements and changes brought to the neighborhood, together with an overview of remaining challenges is illustrated in Table 3 below.

CASC ANTIC		
Baseline Socio-Environmental Conditions	Neighborhood Changes	Remaining Challenges
<p><u>Summary:</u> Crumbling buildings, poor waste management, abandonment and unsafe public spaces, and lack of green space</p> <p>2,000 residents displaced and 1,078 buildings destroyed during the initial revitalization of the old town in 1980s-1990s.</p> <p>State of remaining buildings in the Casc Antic in worse conditions than the rest of Barcelona (58% of the buildings considered in adequate state of conservation in 2001 against 80% in the other neighborhoods)</p> <p>Several street corners and areas abandoned with debris and waste accumulation and rodent problems</p> <p>High drug consumption (death rate by overdoses superior to other parts of the city)</p> <p>Health centers in high demand in the neighborhood and often overcrowded with patients suffering from respiratory disease</p> <p>Fewer opportunities to practice sports and physical activity than other parts of the old town and Barcelona as a whole</p> <p>2001: 175 buildings in bad shape, including 35 of them in ruins. Many buildings still receiving water through often leaking rooftop water deposits</p> <p>Many buildings with poor sanitation conditions</p> <p>Inferior waste collection and management</p>	<p>Creation of a large new community plaza with green space, recreational areas, and sports ground (Pou de la Figuera)</p> <p>New community-based urban garden (Hortet del Forat)</p> <p>Small green spaces throughout Sant Pere and Santa Catarina to improve public spaces and eliminate focal points of waste accumulation (i.e., Carrer Flassaders, Carrer Forn de la Fonda)</p> <p>Renovation of the Allada Vermell plaza into a more kids-friendly and green plaza</p> <p>Renovation of water, light, phone, gas, sewage, and public lighting networks and infrastructure for 2.8 million Euros</p> <p>Creation of a local network Xarxa de Consum Solidari with Community Shared Agriculture and ethical trade and of an exchange market</p> <p>Training of low-income and minority women in cooking and catering classes to help them integrate in the labor workforce. Cooking classes to 250 kids in the Casc Antic to create healthy eating habits</p> <p>9.6 million Euros of public investment in collective equipment</p> <p>460,000 Euros of public investment in waste management (i.e. creation of a pneumatic waste system)</p> <p>Creation of a mini-recycling center – Punt Verd</p> <p>Education campaigns to residents to teach them about recycling practices and improved waste management.</p> <p>1.5 million Euros invested in the substitution of old water deposits, repair to the deficient lead pipes and sewer systems, the construction of direct water networks in buildings, and installation of solar panels for warm water</p> <p>New sports center (Centro de Esportiu Municipal) and basketball leagues using the equipments of schools after hours</p> <p>Creation of two new community centers: Pou de la Figuera and Convent de Sant Agustí</p>	<p>Most expensive Barcelona district for housing rentals with prices reaching 15.6 Euros per square meter against 13.1% for Barcelona as a whole (2007)</p> <p>Purchasing price of a home in some streets is 20 times the mean annual income per capita – against 15 times in 1991</p> <p>Gentrification threats</p> <p>Affordable fresh food in the future</p> <p>Poor conditions of some streets and buildings, which require structural and sanitation improvements</p> <p>Many immigrant families living in substandard conditions in overcrowded buildings</p> <p>Drug consumption and trafficking</p>

Table 3: Baseline socio-environmental conditions, neighborhood changes, and remaining challenges in Casc Antic Antic

Sources of Information: Tello, 2004; Mas and Verger 2004; Idealista 2007, Abella 2004, Martin 2007, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2005, Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2006, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2009, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2010, AECCA, Veins en Defense de la Barcelona Vella, Colectivo del Forat).

2.3 From degradation and abandonment to community participation in environmental restoration in Cayo Hueso, Havana

2.3.1 Multiple processes and layers of neglect

2.3.1.1 Expansion and development during Pre-Castro Havana

At the beginning of the XXth century, builders, architects, engineers, planners, and financial firms from the United States – which occupied Cuba after the island’s independence in 1898 – joined forces to turn the city into a corporate center and elite-oriented urban metropolis. They used Havana as an urban laboratory for new developments, which included: the building of an expansive network of water mains, gas and sewage lines, rain drainage systems, and electric streetlights, the creation of a garbage collection system, and the construction of street cars to run along newly created avenues and boulevards (Coyula, 2009b; Taylor, 2009). This new infrastructure led to the exodus of higher classes from the congested and dense Havana Vieja and Centro Havana towards Vedado and Miramar, new neighborhoods which resembled garden city environments characterized by broad streets, lush gardens and parks, and elegant mansions, and accompanied by new social clubs, sophisticated cafés, theaters, and tourism facilities.

As in Barcelona and Boston, the massive flight of residents away from the central city resulted in new residents moving into Cayo Hueso, mostly low-income, seasonal, and immigrant workers employed in construction, in the port installations, or in tobacco factories (Díaz, 2001). In Havana, the very poor remained relatively invisible (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003). Most of them lived in shantytowns in the outskirts or were hidden in central Havana. They traditionally occupied *solares* and *cuarterías* (degraded rooming houses in baroque and neoclassical mansions often subdivided horizontally and vertically to take advantage of the high ceilings and build an additional floor in between two official floors) or in *ciudadelas* (one or two floors of rooms organized around a central courtyard with only one common bathroom, with an entire family living in one single room; see Figure 8 below) (Coyula, 2009a). As working-class residents increased in the 1920s and 1930s, Cayo Hueso became come more crowded and conditions precarious and unsanitary.

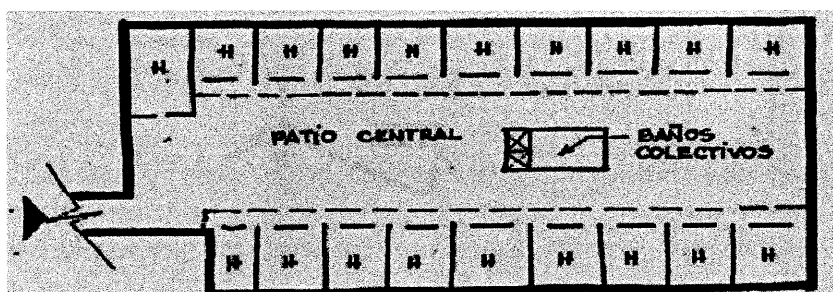


Figure 8: Structure of a typical *ciudadela*: Source: Mario Coyula, Arquitectura Cuba

Socio-spatial segregation in Havana was reinforced by forced racial residential and labor force segregation. As a whole, Afro Cubans encountered multiple obstacles to rent or buy a home in wealthy white neighborhoods, while they had no problem establishing themselves in lower-class neighborhoods. They often faced landlords claiming that apartments or rooms were already rented (De la Fuente, 2000). As richer residents moved out of Cayo Hueso, Afro Cubans moved in large numbers. During the US occupation, solares were identified by the US troops and by white Cubans as spaces “for blacks”, as an attempt to exclude the poorest of the poor from the geography of the city and from society. It was a cultural and racial ratification of social hierarchies (De la Fuente, 2000). Neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso were also often associated, in the imaginary of Cubans and Americans, as focal points of marginality, crime, and promiscuity. Even when buildings or blocks were not occupied in majority by Afro Cubans, their residents were associated with being black (De la Fuente, 2000). Afro Cubans, and women in particular, were also concentrated in the lowest paying industrial or agricultural jobs, which determined that they often lived in the worst conditions in solares or *ciudadelas* (Taylor, 2009).

Cultural traditions dotted Cayo Hueso with a strong artistic identity and relieved the harshness of daily lives. The *rumba* and *feeling* music genres originated in the neighborhood (Gómez & Niedo, 2005). All of this together created an artistic and lively atmosphere in the neighborhood, with cultural manifestations developing not only in formal spaces, but also in the streets and in the courtyards of the solares. With a majority of mestizos and large number of Afro Cubans, Cayo Hueso was also home to Afro Cuban *santeros* and *paleros* religious leaders (Rey, Peña, & Gutiérrez, 2006) and to *yoruba* traditions, the religion brought by the first African slaves. However, in the cultural domain as well, Cayo Hueso residents faced the harsh and racist rules of the American occupier. American officials prohibited Afro Cuban processions and public demonstrations from religious Afro Cuban societies, which included what they called absurd rituals and a dangerous mixture of Catholicism and evil African cults (De la Fuente, 2000). Dances like Rumba were prohibited in public due to their obscene and sexualized character. In parallel, private clubs and casinos sprung throughout Havana (De la Fuente, 2000). Because Afro Cubans had no right of entry their presence became smaller in the cafés, restaurants, and new elegant boulevards of the city. Humiliation for Afro Cubans was rampant everywhere in Havana.

2.3.1.2 Post-1959 Cayo Hueso: disrepair and marginalization in a context of national equity policies and economic troubles

In 1959, when Fidel Castro troops triumphally entered Havana, their message was centered on retaking control over the Cuban economy, which had been heavily and controlled by American business interests, reestablishing social equity, and supporting rural development. In fact, at the end of the 1950s, with a population 3.5 times higher than the two next largest cities combined (Santiago and Camaguey), Havana was the largest city of the country, as a well a center of economic growth, cultural life, and administrative centralization. Educational levels, access to health care, sanitary standards, and employment opportunities were higher than in any other parts of the country (Pérez-López & Díaz Briquets, 2000).

Castro's program was oriented towards improving the living conditions and quality of life

of all Cubans, especially farmers and formal laborers, as well as addressing unemployment, weak industrialization, poor infrastructure, and low health and education indicators (Taylor, 2009). The new government's goal was to promote harmonious and proportional development, a balanced regional growth, and the stabilization of the rural agricultural labor force. This emphasis was also a way to stop the migration of residents to Havana (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Oliveras & Díaz, 2007). The government dedicated most of its investment to the countryside and secondary cities, as a way to address social inequities, remediate decades of neglect accumulated with previous governments (Pérez-López & Díaz Briquets, 2000; Spiegel et al., 2004), as well as bridge the divide between the countryside and the city. In 1966, Castro presented his motto: a "minimum of urbanism and a maximum of ruralism." Between 1962 and 1972, only 15% of new housing developments were geared towards Havana even though it encompassed 27% of Cuba's total population. The government established 335 new towns through the country, each with its own set of schools, health centers, and social services (Pérez-López & Díaz Briquets, 2000).

As a result of these rebalancing policies, Havana's infrastructure and housing fell in severe decay and disrepair, despite occasional showcase attempts to address degradation (Scarpaci, Segre, & Coyula, 2002). Most of new housing development, infrastructure upgrades, and education and health services were located in the shantytowns around Havana. Such priorities triggered the slow but constant deterioration of old Havana neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso. In addition, the absence of a capitalist-type of market led to the decline of commercial activities in Centro Habana, with stores only selling basic goods or generic merchandise (Taylor, 2009) or becoming converted in precarious housing (Coyula, 2009b).

At the beginning of the 1970s, in an attempt to remodel a small section of Cayo Hueso, Fidel Castro commissioned a project to promote new construction and further develop the neighborhood, which consisted in taking down old buildings in a section of Cayo Hueso and replacing them with two giant towers of 20 floors each (Bartolomé Báñez, 2004). This project was the first experience of trying to improve the housing stock of Cayo Hueso through changes in its physical and social environment (Vásquez Penelas & Cantao Zayas, 1997). According to local planners, however, these two towers simply reproduced urban renewal policies taking place at that time in the United States and Europe, which boiled down to systematically destroying old, booming remnants of the past, and bringing new people in. Furthermore, the construction of these buildings opened up empty spaces, which created residual areas and triggered waste dumping practices (Personal interview with Mario Coyula, 2009; Coyula & Hamberg, 2003).

Under Castro's government, new forms of marginalization emerged, and affected Cayo Hueso in particular. In the 1960s, the government took a series of measures to address the discrimination that Afrocubans faced (De la Fuente, 2000). It dismantled structures of segregation such as private recreational areas and schools. The regime also removed racial barriers at the workplace, and collaborated closely with workers' unions to ensure that the rights of Afrocuban were respected. However, to achieve a de-racialized country, the government decided to close Afrocuban clubs, as they were perceived as an obstacle to the revolutionary objectives. In the 1960s, the government declared Afrocuban religions such as Santerías as barriers to the construction of the new Cuban man and as grotesque replications of primitive rites (De la Fuente, 2000). Some Afrocuban initiation ceremonies were temporarily prohibited. Over the years, being marginal in Cuba has thus been closely related to racial prejudices against Afrocuban forms of expression (Hernández, Vásquez, Zardoya, & Mejiles, 2004). Because such

measures have affected their identity, many Afrocubans have felt excluded by the regime.

Marginalization is strongly associated with public perceptions related to crime, especially oriented towards Afrocubans, which have further marginalized neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso. In 1987, 31% of the areas officially classified as “delinquency foci” were in the three municipalities with most Afrocubans, namely Centro Habana, Habana Vieja, and Marianao, even though they only comprised 20% of the whole Havana population and studies demonstrated that, in reality, crime rates in these areas were not above the average of the rates of Havana as a whole (De la Fuente, 2000). Consequently, the question of marginality in Havana should be approached in a different way than in Barcelona and Boston. Marginality is not necessarily equivalent to low access to goods, or high poverty and crime (Hernández et al., 2004). It stems from the variety of discriminatory discourses against certain territories and their residents.

Last, marginality is connected to questions of vulnerability vis-à-vis crises and disasters. With the economic crisis that erupted after the fall of the community wall in 1989, an entire sector of the population is now called “at risk” or “vulnerable,” especially because of food insecurity and other needs that can not be satisfied (Ferriol Muruaga, 1998). The economic crisis has aggravated racial inequalities and social tensions, especially in Cayo Hueso. In 1993, the legalization of the dollar in 1993 – 26 times as valuable as the peso Cubano and with which most goods and services (except for basic food, medication, and rent) are now paid – has brought with it a two-tier society: Cubans who are linked to the tourism sector or to foreign companies and are paid in convertible currency, and Cubans working for the state who receive their salary in national pesos (Coyula, 2009a). Since Afrocubans still tend to have less access to higher education and higher paid jobs than white workers, the changes in the structure of the economy and the introduction of private capital have also widened differences in social status and economic comfort (De la Fuente, 2000). As a result, in Cayo Hueso, Afrocubans as well as the large number of residents in the public sector, have been in particularly delicate positions.



Photos: Housing decay in Cayo Hueso (left). A typical street in Cayo Hueso (right).

2.3.2 Territorial and environmental inequities during the Special Period

At the end of the 1980s, Cayo Hueso was considered a vulnerable and marginalized community from a housing, environmental, and health standpoint. Buildings were crumbling to the point of no return, and residents were at risk of pieces falling on them. Water and sanitation systems were very degraded, with a strong relation between spatial inequities and race (Coyula, 2009b). Scant maintenance had been given to water and sewer plants as well as to distribution, collection and transmission systems. As a result of the Revolution's priorities and despite the commitment to provide decent housing for all Cubans, by the end of the 1980s, central areas of Havana were over-crowded, with multiple generations living together. Levels of chronic heart disease, cancer, and diabetes as well as injuries were higher in Centro Habana than in all municipalities (Bonet et al., 1996). Cayo Hueso was also a neighborhood with a higher proportion of residents over 65 – 13.8% of the population of Centro Habana compared to 11% in all Havana and 9.1% in Cuba (Yassi et al., 1999). This population was in more fragile conditions than other groups, as the elderly is not able to move through Havana to seek jobs and services and did not often have access to the new market economy (Interview with Miguel Coyula, 2010).

In addition, Cayo Hueso had a deficient amount of green and recreational space: Centro Habana had a total of 358 hectares of green space, which amounts to 0.22 m³ per inhabitant, while Havana as a whole had 3.8m³ per inhabitant (Oliveras & Díaz, 2007). Out of the 21 existing neighborhood parks, small green spaces, recreational areas for kids, and marked public spaces, 17 were either in less than acceptable or bad state because of breaks, slow deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient lighting, and trash dumping. Schools had little space for physical activity and often used the nearby neighborhood Parque Trillo. Kids also lacked access to recreational areas and playgrounds (Instituto de Planificación Física de Cuba, 2002). The area was the symbol of the divisions and contrasts in the city: a coastal Havana for outside visitors and a shapeless Deep Havana of slums, illustrating social, territorial, racial and cultural discrepancies in the city (Coyula, 2009a).

When the communist block fell in 1989, Cuba entered a state of shock and deep socio-economic crisis called the Periodo Especial (Special Period). In 1988, socialist partners accounted for 87% of Cuba's imports and 86.4% of its exports (Comité Estatal de Estadísticas, 1999). All of a sudden, the country lost its political allies, trade partners, and providers of industrialized goods and oil resources all together. When the economy reached its lowest point in 1994, Cuban agriculture was only producing 55% of its 1990 levels (Sinclair & Thompson, 2001). This crisis had, especially between 1990 and 1994, and continues to have, severe impacts on the population and on the health and social services, transportation, water provision, housing, and nutrition – with shortages of meat, milk and flour (Garfield & Santana, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1997; Uriarte-Gastón, 2002). From 1994 to 1990, caloric intake fell dramatically– from 3,200 calories a day to 2,300 a day (FAO, 2001).

In Havana, the further degradation of buildings in Centro Habana and Old Havana is probably the most salient reflection of the Special Period. Between 1990 and 1993, housing construction came to a stall as building materials became unavailable in Cuba, which led to the further dilapidation of the housing stock (Uriarte-Gastón, 2002). Today, in Havana as a whole, half of the 560,000 dwellings are in a poor state; 60,000 are not-repairable and require demolition, and 75,000 are sustained thanks to wooden beam (Pérez-López & Díaz Briquets,

2000). In that sense, Castro's regime has failed to put address housing needs in Havana (Hernández et al., 2004). Furthermore, for at least the first decade of the Special Period, waste collection was only carried out in the commercial zones. During that time, disease vectors were prevalent and diarrheal diseases, leptospirosis, tuberculosis (TB), and STDs increased quite drastically (Instituto Nacional De Higiene, 1999). In 1992, the tightening of the US embargo against Cuba worsened this dire economic and health situation.

Cayo Hueso took a particularly strong hit. In the middle of the 1990s, 94% of its buildings were considered in "very bad" state, against 45% in Centro Havana as a whole (Instituto de Planificación Física de Cuba, 2002). Residents were highly vulnerable to hurricanes, as the highly precarious state of buildings mean that they are at risk of being injured or killed (Coyula, 2009b). Flooding risks in Cayo Hueso are high (Instituto de Planificación Física de Cuba, 2002). During the Special Period, health outcomes have also been worse in Cayo Hueso in comparison with the rest of Cuba or Havana. For instance, between 1993 and 1995, overall crude mortality in Cuba was 7.1 per 1000 population against 11.1 in Centro Habana. In that same period, rates of cancer in Cuba were 136.6 per 100,000 people against 206.6 in Centro Habana (Bonet et al., 1996). At the beginning of the Special Period, the index of overcrowding reached 7 people per room in Cayo Hueso, bringing with it higher rates of infectious diseases than other parts of Havana. In the 1990s, more than 50% of the residents did not have daily access to potable water and waste disposal systems were broken (Yassi et al., 1999).

In that sense, by the beginning of the 1990s spatial and territorial inequalities were obvious in Cayo Hueso. Territory constituted a clear marker of inequalities, with a strong polarization between residents who were living in airier neighborhoods with better conditions and those who were in overcrowded central areas with less capacity to improve their wellbeing and with lower socio-economic opportunities (Espina et al., 2005). The failure of the government to improve conditions in the degraded areas of the center allowed for the survival and reproduction of traditional residential patterns linking race with poverty. During the Special Period, while municipalities such as Playa were considered in more favorable situation, Centro Habana was considered by Cuban sociologists in disfavorable conditions (Espina et al., 2005). Coupled with these conditions, the social perceptions related to marginality and crime were still defined racially, which was an indicator that the goal of an deracialized society had not been achieved despite the governmental attempts (De la Fuente, 2000).

In sum, residents of Cayo Hueso have witnessed their neighborhood reach a state of decadence and environmental decay as a consequence of decades of abandonment. Afro-Cuban residents faced particular hardship as they tried to have a place and identity in the Cuban society and in Havana in general. However, despite these difficulties and the exacerbation of territorial and racial inequalities under the Special Period, community leaders and residents became active at the end of the 1980s to improve the environmental and health conditions of the neighborhood.

2.3.3 Autonomous community participation for the rehabilitation of Cayo Hueso

2.3.3.1 Structural environmental improvements through the Talleres Integrales de Transformación del Barrio (TTIB)

Just before the fall of the communist block in 1989, new decentralized community

initiatives had emerged in Havana. In fact, at the end of the 1980s, community members and planners had shared their concerns with Cuban officials about Havana's social, environmental, and economic problems (Spiegel et al., 2004). Planners had also started to express their frustration towards the Soviet type of planning practice, and demanded social initiatives based on strong community participation (Ramirez, 2005; Rey, 2001). Their concerns took place during the Rectification Period, a campaign launched in 1986 to "rectify errors and negative tendencies" in a context of fiscal problems and austerity policies (Eckstein, 2003).

Consequently, in 1987, Castro created the planning agency GDIC – Grupo para el Desarrollo Integral de la Capital (Group for the Comprehensive Development of the Capital), as a way to transition towards participatory forms of planning in Havana and advise the government on urban policy (Uriarte-Gastón, 2002). The GDIC is a public institution independent from Cuban central institutions and structures. Its core working strategy is to focus on the problem of the urban habitat as a whole, starting with a full participatory diagnosis of needs and problems in the city. Several founders of the GDIC, such as Mario Coyula, also insisted on taking into consideration the traditions, historic memory, social and psychological references, and fabric of the neighborhoods. Their vision was to improve community life with residents as objects and subjects of transformations (Rey, 2001), and recreate a balanced relation between the conservation and the revitalization of the built fabric (Coyula, 2008).

In order to operationalize this vision of community-based decision-making and development, the GDIC created the Talleres de Transformación Integral del Barrio (Workshops for the Comprehensive Transformation of the Neighborhood) – TTIB. The TTIBs were meant to become a space for social exchange and for the development of community-based solutions to problems (Rey, 2001). The GDIC put in place a multidisciplinary technical team of community members to lead each TTIB: architects, planners, sociologists, psychologists, geographers, environmentalists, and engineers. Three workshops – Cayo Hueso, Atarés, and La Guinera – were originally created to address habitat and socio-environmental problems in Havana's most vulnerable and deteriorated neighborhoods. By 2002, their number had grown to 20 (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003). From an administrative standpoint, the TTIBs are under the methodological guidance of the GDIC and have strong relations with the Popular Council delegates, which are local government units (Ramirez, 2005). As spaces of autonomous decision-making which allow for meaningful citizen participation, the TTIBs have played an important role in the generation and protection of an emergent civil society (Dilla & Oxhorn, 2002).

The TTIBs methodology has been simple: To develop self-managed experimental projects managed by community actors and implement them through participatory processes. The workshops are as much a tool to address structural needs and problems as a mechanism to promote permanent open dialogue and leadership capacity building (Rey, 2001). They are meant to contribute to the comprehensive development of the neighborhood, that is to its physical as well as human aspects (Coyula, 2008). Every two years, the TTIBs create a "Participatory Diagnosis," which outlines neighborhood strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks as identified by the residents. Upon completion, the diagnoses are turned into Strategic Community Plans, which serves as a way to motivate community initiatives, advocate municipal authorities, and raise funds from international organizations (Ramirez, 2005).

In its initial years, the Cayo Hueso TTIB focused on housing improvements, local economic development, rescue of cultural traditions, education, and training (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003). The TTIB initially developed an inventory of all buildings, infrastructure, parks and green spaces, and recreational areas in Cayo Hueso. Its staff also identified social, economic, and environmental issues in the neighborhood – especially problems related to food supply, contamination, housing conditions, and environmental amenities. Through the help of Oxfam Canada and UNICEF and the creation of a small plant to recycle rubble into mortar blocks, the TTIB improved living conditions in the neighborhood (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003) by repairing more than 12 tenement buildings in the first three years (Uriarte-Gastón, 2002). One of the most successful housing improvements in Cayo Hueso has been the renovation of a *ciudadela* complex on Calle Espada # 411 between 1994 and 1996. Before the works, the roofs leaked, there was only one community bathroom, and plumbing was almost inexistent. Here, the sixteen original single-roomed apartments were transformed into 17 duplex apartments with kitchen, bath and a common patio, and this according to the design chosen by each family, who also participated in the construction of the housing and in its maintenance. However, after a few years and because of the scarcity of building materials during the Special Period, most of the TTIB projects in Cayo Hueso became geared towards activities that require fewer material resources, but rehabilitate degraded areas (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Díaz, 2001). The TTIB turned its attention to broader habitat and environmental improvements, support to risk groups, civic education, economic development through urban agriculture, as well as to the rescue of traditions (Rey, 2001).

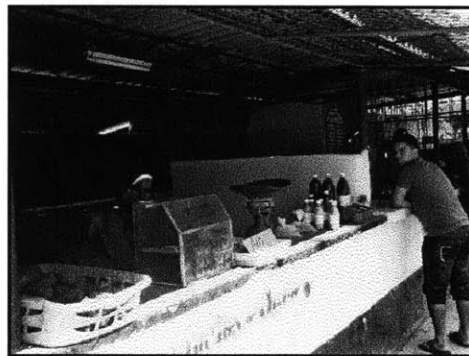
In the habitat and environmental domain, the emphasis of the Cayo Hueso TTIB has been on recuperating empty lots to convert them into parks and recreational areas. The TTIB has also focused on (re)planting trees, developing community gardens, creating community groups for environmental clean-up, designing beautification projects, developing environmental education, and implementing solid waste recycling programs (Rey, 2001). Over the course of its 22 years of experience, the TTIB fixed up parks, such as the Trillo Park and the Parque de los Martires, and reforested them with the help of a European NGO and the support of the Provincial government. In the health domain, the TTIB created the project “Support to the Family Doctor and Nurse,” which includes the creation of 20 family medical consults, and involves, among others, a series of workshops on prominent health issues in the neighborhood. Its vision was to enhance the working conditions and consults of family doctors and bring medical consults closer to the residents of the communities (Díaz, 2001).

One of the most innovative endeavors in Cayo Hueso has been the creation of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña (House for the Boy and the Girl) in 1998, as a new community cultural center and recreational space for kids in lieu of a dumping ground. The Casa is the first experience of a project in Havana proposed by children who share decisions with the adults working in the TTIB. The project is built around the respect of children’s rights (Sardiñas, 2009). It has been supported by the Popular Council of Cayo Hueso, financed by UNICEF, and maintained with the help of local leaders, families, and kids. The Casa includes a library, game space, and an outdoor park and playground called Tesoro Escondido. In 2009, the house received the support of Save the Children Spain to revitalize an empty space next to the house and transform it into a new cultural recreational outdoor area for kids.

The Casa has also been instrumental in the creation of an Organopónico de Alto Rendimiento (OAR) – a high yield urban garden – in Cayo Hueso. Urban agriculture in Cuba

initially emerged with the Special Period crisis as a spontaneous response of residents to food shortages and dramatic increases in food insecurity (Premat, 2009). Later, urban agriculture became institutionalized through Cuba and officially endorsed by government officials. In 1991, the local Havana government gave away human and material resources as well as public land to encourage residents to produce their own food on any available space (Hernández, Caridad, & Medina, 2001), including on common patios, backyards, balconies and terraces, and roofs, which were known as *patios* or *parcelas* (Premat, 2009). Today, urban agriculture in Havana covers more than 10% of the land base, links 22,000 urban and peri-urban producers, and provides residents with 150 to 350 grams of fresh vegetables and culinary herbs per day (Cruz & Medina, 2003). In Cayo Hueso, the organopónico was negotiated with the Urban Agriculture Local Office of the Municipality of Centro Habana by the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, and with the help of the Cayo Hueso TTIB and the active participation of kids from the Casa.

The purpose of organopónicos is to provide produce to local residents, by using plots of land over one hectare to achieve a yield of 15 kg/m² to 20 kg/m². The production is sold at a stall next to the organopónico, and at lower prices than those at free markets (Cruz & Medina, 2003). A Credit and Service Cooperative (CCS) – a partnership between farmers from a farm just outside Havana – is also allowed to sell 95% of its production to the Cayo Hueso stall, provided farmers hand over 5% of their production to the State. The CCS offers semi-processed food products such as jams or juices to customers. In addition, the organopónico hosts a Technical Agricultural Consult (CTA), which provides technical advice to residents cultivating in patios and parcelas and sells seedlings, fertilizer, pesticides, and plants in two nearby other stalls.



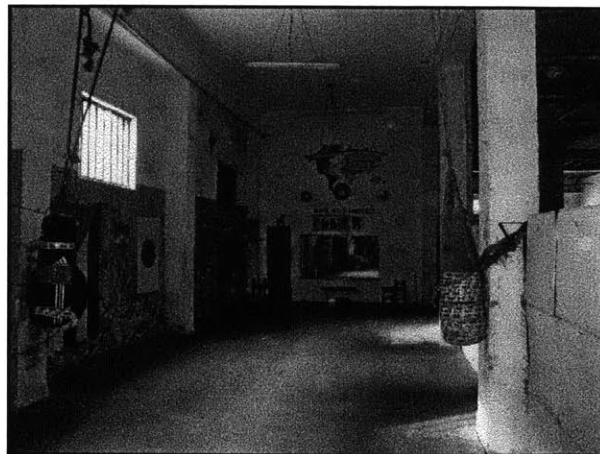
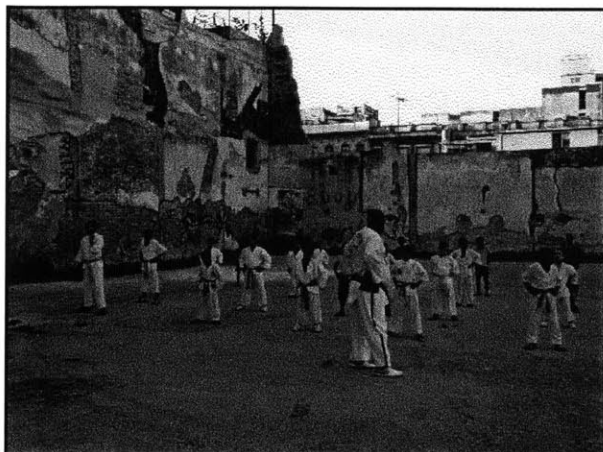
Photos: High-yield urban garden (left) and adjacent food and plant stalls (right)

2.3.3.2 Recreational, sports, and educational activities for youth

In Cuba, the extensive economic and social crisis that arose from the fall of communism brought with it the birth of a new “neighborhood movement” (p.65) of community-based organizations and activities (Dilla, Soriano Fernández, & Flores Castro, 1998; Soriano Fernández, Dilla, & Flores Castro, 1999). The neighborhood movement emerged through the horizontal networks that existed at the community level (Uriarte-Gastón, 2002), with leaders acting in an independent and spontaneous manner. In Cayo Hueso, a variety of independent projects surfaced during the 1990s and 2000s as a counterpoint to the neighborhood degradation and to mounting environmental and health issues. Most of their emphasis has been on developing recreational and sports activities for the local youth and children.

A first independent project is a gym and community center called *Quiero a Mi Barrio* (I Love my Neighborhood). It was built instead two unsanitary and abandoned buildings infested with insects and stagnant water. *Quiero a mi Barrio* was born out the dedication of a community leader and karate teacher, Jaime, accompanied by large group of youth and neighbors who cleaned the space, sanitized, repaired, and painted it. Initially, Jaime and his supporters built equipment from scrap and recycled materials. However, over the years, *Quiero a mi Barrio* has received equipment from Puerto Rican athletes, Save the Children, UNICEF, and the City of Oleiros in Spain. Quiero a mi Barrio offers karate, aerobic, and dance classes and also has exercise room with machine and weights. Since 2008, Save the Children has collaborated with Jaime to develop training workshops to form at-risk youth in professions linked to the building industry and connect them with companies. Through the years, Quiero a mi Barrio has become connected to the Cayo Hueso TTIB workshop and has gained more official recognition.

Another community leader, Cristián, is leading martial arts classes in an empty lot called El Beisbolito, which he fixed up with residents. During the cleanup stage, Cristián received the support of a local artist, Salvador González, who restored walls and painted colorful murals. El Beisbolito is so far the only outdoor community recreational space for kids to practice sports in Cayo Hueso. Every day, Cristián and a few other teachers gather local kids for a two-hour Taekwondo class. They accompany lessons with self-esteem exercises, healthy lifestyle lessons, and crime prevention lessons. Kids also gather on the Beisbolito to play baseball. Save the Children is currently planning the rehabilitation of the area to transform it into an outdoor gym and is working with Cayo Hueso schools to rehab school playgrounds and restore sports spaces.



Photos: Martial arts in the Beisbolito plaza (left) and Quiero a mi Barrio Community Center (right)

In addition to these two projects, the Casa del Niño y de la Niña has been doing its own share of work to improve recreational opportunities for local kids. At the beginning of the 2000s, the Casa coordinator, Rosa, collaborated with the TTIB project *Jugando en mi Barrio* (Playing in my Neighborhood) to promote sports and recreational activities in schools and parks through tools, games, and kites donated by UNICEF or built out of recycled materials painted by kids and local artists. Today, Rosa also organizes play dates and workshops in parks and other recreational activities in the streets, which are then closed off by the police. From an advocacy standpoint, Rosa and the kids work to bring constant environmental improvements to the larger parks of the neighborhood – Parque Maceo along the Malecón in particular – and negotiate with the Maceo park manager to improve kids’ access to the park’s recreational spaces, enhance its safety (it is a heavily trafficked area), and plant new trees.

Last, independent leaders and activists in Cayo Hueso focus much of their attention on environmental education and empowerment projects with kids and youth. In that regard, the project *Moros y Cristianos* is a particularly rich experience led by two active Cayo Hueso residents working closely with the Felix Varela NGO – an environmental Cuban NGO. One of the main *Moros y Cristianos* workshops has consisted in the creation of a Mapa Verde (Green Map) of the neighborhood. The Mapa Verde project is meant to help “young people revitalize, reclaim, and restore their community assets” (Green Map, 2007). It is a moldable eco-cultural mapmaking methodology shared by 250 communities worldwide. The methodology promotes a sense of cultural diversity, allows for a community self-definition of local environmental goods, and helps participants focus on solving environmental issues in an autonomous way.

In 2003-2004, during the process of creating a green map for Cayo Hueso, participants developed mapping skills, gained a sense of ownership over the assets and needs of their neighborhood, and learned new knowledge and values on environmental protection. Kids used a series of internationally recognized icons to locate the environmental goods in the neighborhood, but they also created their own icons, which were meant to reflect their own sense of what encompasses their environment. For instance, kids placed icons such as community gardens, organic food stalls, shops for farming products, sports facilities, but also murals, bakeries, community centers or cultural monuments on the map. This map has galvanized community volunteer initiatives as residents turned empty spaces into tot lots and community centers. It has also supported participants in their advocacy for environmental improvements in Cayo Hueso.

2.3.3.3 Autonomous neighborhood clean-up and rehabilitation

Last, environmental improvements in Cayo Hueso have been shaped by the organization of autonomous clean-up and rehabilitation initiatives by local residents and groups. The neighborhood is the site of permaculture projects organized by neighbors, who clean up waste in neglected patios in their housing complex, plant bananas, vegetables, and medicinal plants, and maintain the new spaces collaboratively. Such projects are part of the 8,000 patios and parcelas recorded in Havana in 1999 – the greatest surface of agricultural production in the city (Hernández et al., 2001). The organization of residents around permaculture is representative of early media reports of urban agriculture in Cuba, which equated these patios with “war trenches and” the farmers with “troops” (Hernández et al., 2001).

Furthermore, together with a core active volunteer Pablo, Rosa has developed kids

brigades -- Por un Barrio Más Limpio (For a Cleaner Neighborhood), Arco Iris, and Brigada Gloop – around environmental clean-up and protection in Cayo Hueso. The two first brigades bring kids together after school to do environmental clean up and maintenance along the Malecón, as well as in the parks, in the organopónico, and in public spaces. The third brigade teaches residents how to protect existing sources of potable water in the neighborhood. Rosa, Pablo, and the kids also conduct targeted health campaign around hygiene and protection against mosquito-based epidemics. They sample stagnant water and water tanks throughout Cayo Hueso to analyze if they contain traces of dengue. Over the years, Rosa and the kids have also lobbied the local government to increase the number of trash collectors and containers and improve street hygiene in Cayo Hueso. Independently from the Casa, Rosa Sardiñas has initiated a green street project called “El Callejón del Poeta” (The Cul-De-Sac of the Poet – named after a German poet who lived on the street), which consists in renovating buildings, cleaning-up and repairing the street, as well as bringing plants along facades.

To finish, Cayo Hueso hosts the Callejón de Hamel – a small street in the neighborhood converted into an outdoor park with statues and benches made of recycled bathtubs, along with playgrounds, trees and fountains, and murals. This work was created by the artist Salvador González starting in 1990. Despite being the beacon of the “feeling” music in the 1940s, by the 1980s, the Callejón had become a unsanitary and dangerous street. However, today, the murals painted with bright colors and mixed with poetry give the street an impression of an outdoor museum where visitor walk between ornate metal and concrete statues and painted arches with vines. The project freshens the atmosphere of the neighborhood and beautifies it. It also includes the repair and sanitation of neighboring buildings, the provision of new playgrounds and sports facilities for nearby schools, and the creation of artistic and playful activities for kids. It offers them a safe place to play away from over-trafficked streets. Today, the Callejón also hosts Afrocuban Rumba concerts on Sundays, which attracts visitors from all over the city and the world. It has become a space that residents can enjoy as their own colorful park and a great resource for the neighborhood. At the present time, Salvador is working on an outdoor sculpture park and a new kids’ playground in an empty lot at the end of the Callejón.



Photos: El Callejón del Hamel

In sum, since the end of the 1980s, Cayo Hueso has witnessed the growth of projects and initiatives around a comprehensive environmental revitalization and health improvements as a response to laissez-faire policies of degradation by the US occupant and later Castro government and mounting public health concerns. Some local leaders have integrated the Taller de Transformación Integral del Barrio (TTIB) sponsored by civil servants in the GDIC, but others have developed actions independently, as a complement or even a counterpoint to the TTIB endeavors. As local activists autonomously or independently created urban farms, recreational areas and playgrounds, improved waste management, renovated parks, or enhanced sanitation in the neighborhood, they also contributed to broader community development. Today, Cayo Hueso is the only neighborhood of Centro Havana with an urban farm and the only neighborhood in Havana with a community center such as the Casa del Niño y de la Niña and a community gym such as Quiero a mi Barrio. It has also achieved the renovation of crumbling and fragile buildings through community-based diagnostics and initiatives.

That said, the neighborhood transformation does not mean that all problems have been eradicated in Cayo Hueso. The most drastic challenge for the neighborhood is still the state of numerous buildings, especially ciudadelas. The renovations that are taking place in the neighborhood are slower than the rate of degradation (Plan de Rehabilitación Urbana del Municipio de Centro, 2009; Miguel Coyula, 2009) and, to date, the Cuban government does not have enough material resources to invest in such large-scale projects. Overcrowding is still a major health and social issue. Further improvements need to take place in regards to sanitation and potable water provision as well as waste management and water disposal system. Asthma rates are still high as well as infectious diseases (Roxana Mar, 2009). A summary of the improvements and changes brought to the neighborhood, together with an overview of remaining challenges is illustrated in Table 4 below.

CAYO HUESO		
Baseline Socio-Environmental Conditions	Neighborhood Changes	Remaining Challenges
<p>1989: high degradation of buildings and sanitation and further decay during the Special period (94% of its buildings were considered in “very bad” state, against 45% in Centro Havana as a whole, with increased risks of hurricane and flood damage</p> <p>Early 1990s: More than 50% of residents without daily access to potable water with also broken waste disposal systems</p> <p>Deficient amount of green and public space (0.22 m³ per inhabitant against 3.8 m³ for Havana as a whole). 17 out of 21 parks, recreational, and green spaces were in less than acceptable conditions or bad state</p> <p>Schools with little space for physical activity, and kids with poor access to recreational areas and playgrounds</p> <p>Levels of chronic heart disease, cancer, and diabetes higher in Centro Habana than in all municipalities</p> <p>Higher proportion of residents over 65 – 13.8% of the population of Centro Habana compared to 11% in all Havana and 9.1% in – living in fragile conditions</p> <p>Overall crude mortality in Cuba was 7.1 per 1000 population against 11.1 in Centro Habana</p>	<p>Repair of more than 12 tenement buildings</p> <p>Recuperation of empty lots to convert them into parks and recreational areas.</p> <p>Tree replanting and street beautification projects</p> <p>Solid waste recycling programs</p> <p>Kids brigades – Por un Barrio Más Limpio (For a Cleaner Neighborhood), Arco Iris, and Brigada Gloop – for neighborhood environmental clean-up and protection</p> <p>Increased number of trash collectors and containers and improvement in street hygiene in Cayo Hueso. Community health campaign around hygiene and protection against mosquito-based epidemics</p> <p>Construction of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña as a new community cultural center and recreational space for kids in lieu of a dumping ground</p> <p>Creation of a high yield (15 kg/m² to 20 kg/m²) urban garden which also offered semi-processed food products and hosts a Technical Agricultural Consult (CTA)</p> <p>Permaculture projects by residents who clean up waste in neglected patios in their housing complex, plant crops and plants and maintain the new spaces collaboratively</p> <p>Community gym (Quiero a mi Barrio) and new sports ground (El Beisbolito) for martial arts classes.</p> <p>Renovation of school playgrounds and sports facilities.</p> <p>Jugando en mi Barrio project to promote sports and recreational activities in schools and parks through donated tools, games, and kites or built out of recycled materials painted by kids and local artists</p> <p>Green Map project to help young people revitalize, reclaim, and restore community assets, especially spaces with strong socio-environmental importance</p> <p>Fixing up of parks (i.e., Parque Trillo and Parque de los Martires)</p> <p>Creation of 20 family medical consults, which conduct, among others, a series of workshops on prominent health issues</p> <p>Callejón de Hamel – a street converted into an outdoor park with artwork, along with playgrounds, trees and fountains. and murals</p>	<p>Poor state of numerous buildings, especially ciudadelas.</p> <p>Lack of material resources from the Cuban government to invest in large scale housing renovation projects.</p> <p>Greater overcrowding and hygiene issues than in other Havana neighborhoods</p> <p>Need for further improvements in regards to sanitation, potable water provision, waste management, and water disposal system</p> <p>High asthma rates and infectious diseases</p>

Table 4: Baseline socio-environmental conditions, neighborhood changes, and remaining challenges in Cayo Hueso

Sources of information: (Bonnet et al., 1996; Yassi et al., 1999, Oliveras & Díaz, 2007, Instituto de Planificación Física de Cuba, 2002, Coyula, 2009b, Uriarte-Gastón, 2002, Rey, 2001, Plan de Rehabilitación Urbana del Municipio de Centro, 2009, Miguel Coyula, 2009, Roxana Mar, 2009)

2.4 Discussion

The histories of Dudley, Cayo Antic, and Cayo Hueso reveal similar patterns of unequal development, marginalization, and exclusion despite different contexts of urbanization and political systems. In all three neighborhoods, residents have suffered from substandard living conditions, lack of access to green spaces and recreational facilities, and health issues resulting from inadequate sanitation, waste management systems, and, in Havana and Boston, poor nutrition. In fact, the lack of healthy food options and good nutrition has been a core emphasis of residents' activism. Cayo Hueso suffered from malnutrition while Dudley has been faced with obesity. These conditions were closely coupled with the abandonment of the three neighborhoods by public authorities, and their *laissez-faire* vis-à-vis illegal practices such as trash dumping and resident harassment (in Boston and Barcelona). They were also related with stigmas and negative images associated with the cultural and social practices of residents living in all neighborhood, and with the neighborhood and its conditions in general. In other words, cities resemble each other more than countries.

As they were faced with an engrained degradation, long-term marginalization, and environmental injustices, local residents did not remain passive, silent, or inactive. Raising above despair and doubts, they took action swiftly to collectively turn around their neighborhoods from an environmental and health standpoint. In Dudley, inhabitants and local supporters originally initiated a massive clean-up and take-over of empty spaces to transform them into green spaces, community gardens, and playgrounds, while other groups and leaders focused on technical capacity building, on the one hand, and development of new physical activity and healthy eating options on the other. In the Cayo Antic, residents were involved for six years in an intense conflict with the municipality over the redevelopment of large empty lots in the neighborhoods. First, they self-reconstructed the space as a large green area and, later, the municipality permanently re-built it and financed other environmental and health projects upon the pressure of activists. Much community attention has also been devoted to improvements in sanitation and building structures, as well as waste management, additional green space, and physical activity. In Cayo Hueso, residents took advantage of new spaces for participation opened up by Castro in the 1980s, and creatively organized to bring in structural improvements to buildings, enhance waste management, and develop urban agriculture. Other groups took an independent lead and coalesced around physical activity for youth, environmental capacity-building, and environmental improvements based on art and cultural projects. Not all changes involved only community-based and civic efforts and funding, but many originated and become strengthened due to residents' and leaders' commitment and engagement.

Despite far reaching commonalities across neighborhoods, some differences can be underlined. First, the level of racism and racial discrimination by authorities, developers, and other residents has been much more open and pervasive in Boston than in Cuba, and even less in

Barcelona. In Cuba, racism has manifested in a more insidious way, and this despite the attempts and commitments of the Castro regime to eliminate racial barriers and discrimination in the country. In Barcelona, residents were less confronted with racism than discrimination about their social origins and types of activities and stores in the Casc Antic than in the two other cities. In general, Cayo Hueso residents, and to a certain extent Casc Antic residents, were victims of the pervasive effects of equality policies launched by Castro in 1959s and by the newly democratic Catalan administration after 1975. In Boston, the authorities were completely absent, and ignored Dudley. Furthermore, Dudley residents had to confront additional social problems in the neighborhood such as crime and violence, which added complexity to their environmental revitalization work and which was not the case in Cayo Hueso and Casc Antic. In those two places, unwanted social behavior was limited to petty crimes and drug dealing. Last, Dudley residents were challenged by a completely different urban planning and revitalization issue from Casc Antic and Cayo Hueso: Dudley had more than 1,500 empty lots in the mid-1980s whereas residents in the other neighborhoods had to live in too dense neighborhoods where empty spaces were much more space. Such different circumstances mean that the role of memory and destruction might intervene in different ways in the three neighborhoods. Today, the neighborhoods are confronted with dissimilar remaining challenges: Dudley's poverty and crime rates are still high while Cayo Hueso's core problem is the state of remaining buildings, and many Casc Antic residents face overcrowding and difficult housing conditions.

The difference in political systems had a limited impact on residents' activism in the three neighborhoods. Cayo Hueso is part of a centralized autocratic system. However, residents have been given autonomous spaces of planning, decision-making, and implementation of projects through the TTIBs. The Castro regime did not manage to hamper the independent initiatives of other residents who created independent projects on their own without being taken over or eliminated by authorities. In Barcelona, the forty years of dictatorship and the transition to democracy led to the eruption of a vigorous civil society leading projects and contestations in a city that has been under constant (re)development. Until today, citizens have wanted to be involved and take action on their own and show their place in the city. They have been the embodiment of the very dynamic and active decades of the returned democracy in Spain with a growing distrust towards public authorities over the years. In Boston, despite the presence of a long-term democracy, the demands of Dudley residents were not being heard, and there was not forum for them to express their concerns and being heard by policy makers. Residents had to take action on their own in a broken democracy. In sum, the three neighborhoods displayed different intensity of activism, but their residents nonetheless organized independently and had to show their legitimacy and power vis-à-vis planners and officials.

The work of active residents, leaders, and neighborhood community workers in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic sheds light on their efforts to address long-term environmental and health inequities after decades of decay and abandonment and on the support they have received over time within and outside the neighborhood. However, their initiatives are physically and spatially located in places that have a specific meaning for residents and to which they are emotionally connected. Often times, residents of historically distressed communities display a strong feeling of attachment and community identity to their neighborhood and its deeper history. In the next chapter, I turn to the analysis of the deeper motivations and rationale behind resident mobilization in the three neighborhoods and connect their environmental and health

endeavors to the broader vision they defend for their place. I analyze how such endeavors allow activists to re-make a place for marginalized residents in the city.

3 Place-Remaking, Trauma, and Community Flourishing

Traditional environmental justice scholarship provides a strong basis for understanding the long-time marginalization behind unequal environmental conditions. Communities of color and low-income neighborhoods have been disproportionately impacted by 'brown' contaminating facilities and excluded from decision-making on their land, which stems from a lack of attention to the social context in which unjust distribution occurs and from the unequal distribution of power at the intersection of environmental quality and social hierarchies (Agyeman et al., 2003; Bullard, 1990; Corburn, 2005; Pellow, 2000; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Schlosberg, 2007; Schnaiberg et al., 2002). However, most EJ research has neglected to consider notions of place attachment and identity reconstruction in understanding the environmental struggles of distressed neighborhoods. This is even more true as studies tend to focus on threats and environmental bads rather than examining emerging demands for long-term livability and environmental quality which require sustained commitment to a place. To date, few scholars have engaged in an empirical and comparative assessment of the deeper factors behind proactive environmental mobilization and in a place-based and space-focused analysis of such mobilization.

Intimate bonds of place attachment and community identity among residents have been shown to be the source of social cohesion, shared interests, neighborhood collective action, and eventually political action (Bennett, 1997; Davis, 1991; Gans, 1962; Gotham & Brumley, 2002; Katznelson, 1981; Suttles, 1968; Tilly, 1974; Wellman, 1979). Residents who are more attached to their community interact more with their neighbors and can invest their time in it (Brown et al., 2004). Local participation in neighborhood action often is rooted in an indigenous structure of domestic property relations. For instance, common interests in domestic property frequently coalesce in fights against threats to land, houses, amenities, or safety (Blum & Kingston, 1984; Cox, 1978, 1982; Davis, 1991; Dreier, 1982; Gotham & Brumley, 2002; Suttles, 1968; Venkatesh, 2000). However, only scarce recent studies have examined the deeper sense of place and identity that connect people together beyond fights against private projects, for public housing, towards upward social mobility (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002), or against environmental threats.

A combination of our knowledge on place-attachment and community participation with a study of long-term engagement for sustained environmental and health transformations would shed light on the role of place experience and community attachment in residents' mobilization for greater environmental quality. Bridging these gaps through the analysis of residents, community leaders, and neighborhood workers engaged in environmental quality improvements in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic is the point of this chapter. Here, I engage in an analysis of the relationship between sense of place and space, collective identity, and local mobilization and develop narratives of activists' experiences. I focus on the ways in which residents and organizations engaged in environmental quality initiatives perceive that their work allowed them to re-build their community from within. Through an analysis of interviews with activists and their supporters (individuals, nonprofits, foundations, and a few municipal officials or planners), I focus on the meanings of people's work. I use grounded theory, process tracing, and historical and analytic narratives to present how activists built narratives and meanings around their endeavors, and how they perceived that their environmental initiatives allowed them to achieve broader social agendas.

My analysis shows how the contexts of urbanization, segregation, and planning decisions presented in the previous chapter have influenced the construction of local identities, as well as new uses and meanings of space that strengthen these identities. Over time, place connection becomes a motor for community engagement. Socio-environmental projects in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso act as a way to address trauma from exclusion, create safe havens¹⁵, and allow for community nurturing. In other words, activists use environmental projects to re(make) a place to live and thrive for local residents and reconstruct their identity, and in that sense create intangible benefits that reflect their imaginary and fantasy. As I further explore in the next sections, place-remaking is a dynamic and dialectic process (see Figure 9 below): Place connection together with a realization of neighborhood decay (environmental degradation and sub-standard health indicators) and overall marginalization, and reinforced by motivating forces create a long-lasting engagement in holistic environmental revitalization work and community development. Such action in turn is meant to address deeper goals for place remaking, community reconstruction, and identity strengthening. This holistic revitalization, community development, and place-remaking work is what can be called proactive urban environmental justice action. In return and as a positive feedback loop, revitalization and place-remaking reinforce a positive connection to place and a further desire to protect it.

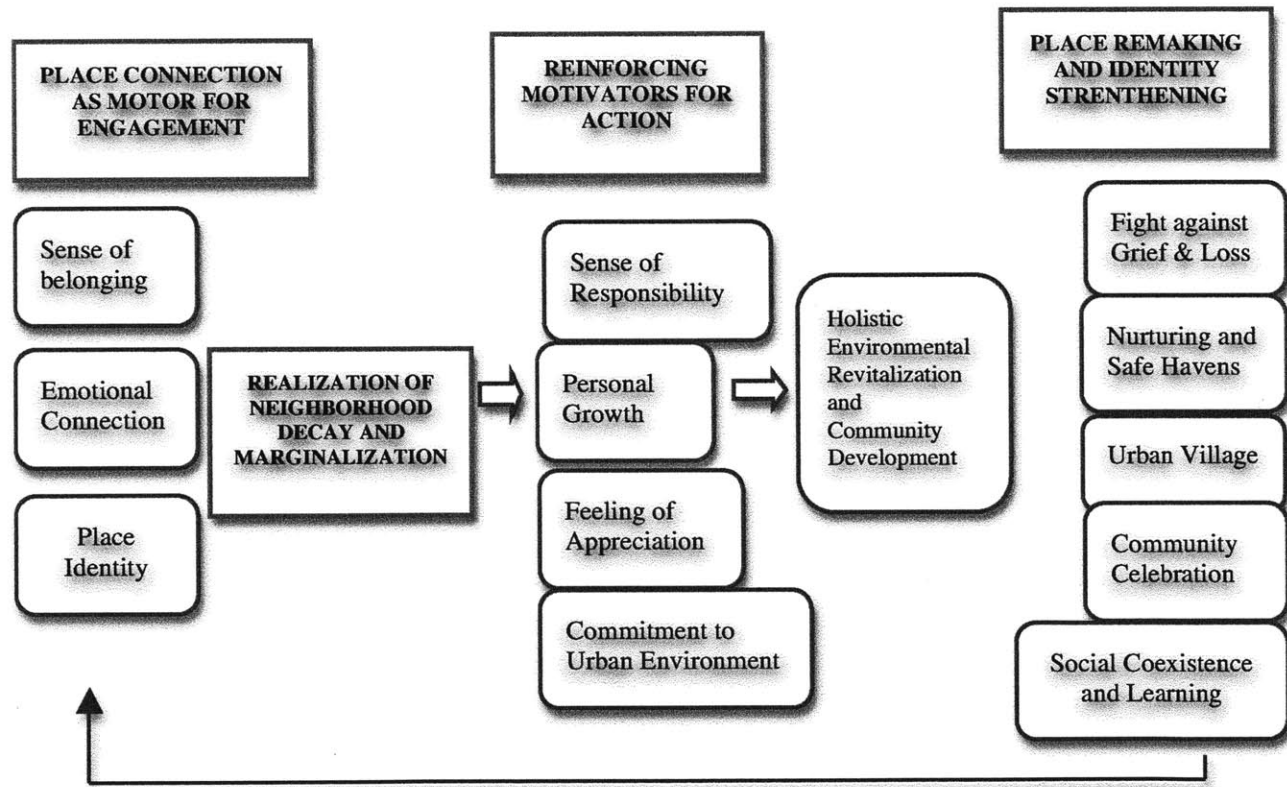


Figure 9: The Dynamic and Dialectic Relation between Place Attachment, Environmental Justice Work, and Place-Remaking

¹⁵ The concept of safe havens in historically marginalized neighborhoods is also being encountered by Anna Livia Brand in a study of distressed urban neighborhoods in New Orleans.

3.1 Caring and taking care of the neighborhood

The mobilization of marginalized communities for greater environmental quality and livability does not occur in isolation. Often times, people are attached to the place in which they live, which is strongly related to identity formation and protection of identity (Altman et al., 1992; Kefalas, 2003; Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). “Place identity” stems from people’s relation to the physical, political and environmental world around them, and gets shaped through their experiences and interactions that create specific values and beliefs (Bondi, 1993; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Proshansky et al., 1983). In traditional distressed neighborhoods, residents have created roots, developed place attachment, and grown bonds of mutual support despite what traditional views of these neighborhoods have portrayed (Manzo et al., 2008).

3.1.1 Sense of belonging, community attachment, and emotional connections to place

In Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, individual and collective sentiments and expressions of attachment have acted as constant motivators for the engagement of residents and leaders in fights for better environmental conditions. Place attachment is expressed in multiple ways in the neighborhoods. First, activists value the assets of the neighborhood. They state their pride and happiness to be living in a central neighborhood well-connected to other parts of the city and filled with close amenities for residents – from traditional shops, transportation connections, cultural goods, artisans, or health centers. These amenities and the centrality of each neighborhood have converted it into a lively place for residents and leaders, who are all charmed and attracted by the dynamism of their neighborhood. Residents feel fortunate to work and reside in the Casc Antic, as Albert (2009), an environmental activist in the NGO GENAB emphasizes: “I’m in real love with the neighborhood, I was born here, and I am a lucky one because I was born here, I live here, and I work for the neighborhood. For an environmental educator, this is just the best.” As many residents, Albert feels a strong connection to his place and its dynamics.

Neighborhood attachment is strongly tied to the sense of identity of residents. In Barcelona and Havana, residents feel honored to be living in a historical part of the city and are attached to its cultural traditions, artistic talents, and architectural patrimony. Rosa (2009), the coordinator of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña in Havana, shares her own impression of the neighborhood:

“In Cayo Hueso, there were soldiers from the war of Independence. There is a strong identity, a strong desire to do things spontaneously, a feeling of belonging. There is also the first popular University. There is a piece of history in every block and everyone learns its history.”

In the neighborhood, community leaders spend ample time organizing commemorative celebrations in honor of deceased historical figures. Most leaders and community workers remember the presence of Rumba and Son musicians, such as Chano Pozo, who entertained residents in old degraded solares of the neighborhood. As a direct upshot of the strong identity and past grandeur and prosperity, residents in all three cities emphasize the importance of preserving the local patrimony (i.e., old houses, churches, convents, building facades, patios, landmarks, etc), which they see as unmovable community jewels.

Residents, leaders, and community workers do not feel only connected to the neighborhood per se, but also to the ethnic and social groups that compose it. In their accounts,

people relate very deeply to the traditional social fabric of their neighborhood. They value the intermixing of generations, cultures, and groups as well as waves of immigrants and newcomers that have enriched the neighborhood. Furthermore, people appreciate the close, warm, and informal relationships between residents, who are sources of mutual help and trust. Travis Watson (2009) from DSNI shares his appreciation for the close relations in Dudley:

“I really like the sense of community. I feel like people kind of look out for each other. You see a lot of people that are helping the elderly off the bus. [...]. I just feel like that sense of community. I feel like it's some of the little, small things I can kind of pick up in this community. I just like the vibe. I like just walking down the streets and kind of just talking to people. People are very real here.”

The attachment to the neighborhood is thus also a question of atmosphere and sense of familiarity.

Relationship building occurs daily outside the house, in the center of the neighborhood in all three cities. Activists explain how important life on the streets is, how much time people spend outside their house, building connections by talking, playing, or doing activities together. In Havana, the Quiero a Mi Barrio gym leader (2009) shares his own sense of connection to the place and its form of living:

“I love my neighborhood. I did not want to leave even though I had the opportunity to leave. These are my roots. I like the neighborhood and its form of all living together. In other countries, people live in their house isolated. This is the case in Europe. You have the neighbor and you don't know them.”

Trish Settles (2009), a former DSNI environmental organizer shares similar impressions of people appreciating the liveliness and dynamism of the Dudley neighborhood:

“There are a number of people who actually move to the DSNI neighborhood just because of the intensity, [...] who live there and stay there because they love the energy, they love the community and what it means. It's really hard to pull yourself away from it [...] An incredible family that really grows up there.”

People feel attracted to the place and its people and the relations built in the neighborhood over time.

More deeply, active leaders and residents relate stories of the community and its people growing together. People share other residents' life stages (in Havana), live expropriations and expulsion with them (in Barcelona in particular), support them during health issues and hospitalizations (especially in Boston), and all build closer ties with each other. An active resident in Boston (2009) explains: “I know a lot of people [...] how people support each other, it's really, if something happens you have everyone here.” Many activists have lived in the neighborhood for decades, and their parents as well, which makes them feel a special connection to the place and to each other. The neighborhood is not only a place where they live. It is home and it is a place where they experience the love, affection, and warmth from others.

Testimonies of activists also reflect the common trajectories experienced by residents in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley through local mobilization, claim building and making, and protests. People feel part of an important history of success of grassroots organization, which has brought them together and built their own memory of the place. As one environmental activist in Boston mentions (2009), “I've walked in this community before and have been able to track back some hundreds of years to see and imagine what that is like [...]. What I find

interesting is how people of color moved to Roxbury and they owned that area and made it theirs". Another resident explains:

"I would say with the urban agriculture, it was always there but at some point it doesn't become there until it hits a certain plateau or somebody can piece all of that together to make a story out of it. If nothing else, it can tell the story of a neighborhood that has really come from the ashes if you will."

As a result, people express a feeling of hope and optimism for the neighborhood. They embraced those victories as early signs of a different future.

In return, early achievements inspired activists and gave them common strength to commit to the future. Positive changes brought legitimacy to the neighborhood and led people to believe in it. As a squatter in Barcelona (2009) emphasizes:

"I got involved in the neighborhood fights because it was abandoned, because of the Forat, because I wanted to do something for the neighborhood, and because there were already occupied houses in the Forat [...] And because the movement had already been going on for years and something really beautiful was being created with the people who were living there, so that gives you desire to participate in this."

For residents, victories served as encouragements towards continued mobilization and helped them build dreams for the neighborhood. Those moments motivated them to accomplish new goals together. As Travis Watson from DSNI (2009) explains:

"People really came together [...]. So I feel like we all have a sense of love for the community, for the people, for our neighbors here. And just that sense of community struggling, trials and triumphs together is really kind of what helps a lot of these folks stick together."

Alice Gomes, an early environmental activist (2009), confirms these thoughts: "I think that when people saw a change happen that it gave them hope to rebuild the Dudley Street neighborhood area. You know, that was one huge problem. So then when the trash was gone it was like ok, so maybe we can have houses here, maybe we can have a park." In other words, early clean-up and rehabilitation efforts have served as a motivator for further efforts, as people wanted to follow the trace of others before them.

In short, individuals experience the processes, relations, and fixed assets of Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic from both personal and collective perspectives. Their accounts reflect the everyday uses and meanings of place. As an environmental NGO activist in Barcelona summarizes: "It is a question of proximity and of confluences in ways of feeling, thinking, and having lived the neighborhood." Residents share common experiences in their neighborhood.

3.1.2 Feeling of responsibility towards city, community, and youth

Over time, residents who are more attached to their community have been shown to interact more with their neighbors and be more prone to investing their time, watching over developments in the neighborhood, and bringing others around them (Brown et al., 2004). People connected to their place of residence feel more obliged to participate in activities and in the processes that affect the neighborhood (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Cohrun, 1994; Davidson & Cotter, 1993). In the environmental domain, environmental threats have triggered action

among residents, led to participation, and eventually has empowered them to have a say in decision-making (Edelstein, 2003; Rich et al., 1995; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001).

In all three neighborhoods, deeply-rooted attachment, place identity, and community belonging are strongly connected to residents feeling the responsibility to take action and improve their place. Attachment and identity precedes activism, but also reinforce it. A staff member of an environmental NGO in Barcelona (2009) explains:

“When you belong to some place, you love it, you take care of it, you spoil it, you want it to improve, no? And, put in practice, this feelings means that, without doing huge stridency, you focus you day to day work towards the project you want the most [...] It’s not anymore ‘I have to do this’.”

A natural segue exists between sense of attachment and personal decision to take action and become an activist. This sense of responsibility operates at three levels in each neighborhood: towards the city, the community, and youth groups. In Havana, Arsenio Garcia, the UNICEF coordinator (2009), who has worked closely with Rosa, the founder of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña explains that Rosa’s strong sense of belonging was a motor for building the house and the playground next to it: “She did everything of what is the house now. She has another meaning for what she does, she is a strong sense of belonging, a lot of energy. But she had to overcome many difficulties.” The creation of the recreational park reflects this deeper sense of responsibility felt by residents.

Residents and their supporters feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the city itself, and view the neighborhood as a means to show their engagement in the city. It is a question of citizen’s consciousness. This is especially true in Barcelona, but much less in Boston and Havana. People report the abuses, transformations, and manipulations that Barcelona as a city has suffered, and, as a result, attempt to take action to prevent further damages. As Eva from Architects without Borders (2009) explains: “[getting involved in the Casc Antic] was like rediscovering my city, like getting aware of where I was living, because propaganda hides the shit. But now I have a more realistic vision of the city, by seeing what happens in it and from knowing people from other neighborhoods”. In Boston, environmental NGOs that have a broad regional reach have taken the decision to work in Dudley as a way to become grounded locally. As Jess Liborio from The Food Project (2009) states:

“I think it’s about having more of a presence in Boston. Nationally we are very well known as a youth development and agriculture program. Like anyone that works with agriculture and young people will know us because we were doing it first and we have tried to be a model and kind of nationally do that work. I think in Boston we are much less known. I think in terms of being a face of like local food in Boston, I think that is what we are trying to do”.

The neighborhood is then a mechanism and a scale to apply an organization’s principles, goals, vision, and projects.

Local neighborhood history has triggered a personal commitment to act for vulnerable communities in all cities. In Cayo Hueso, the TTIB workshop coordinator (2009) shares his feelings:

“There was a strong popular movement in the solares to solve the issues in the neighborhood. Some soldiers along with Quintin Bandera stayed in the park right here to solve the needs of the neighborhood. [...] Raul Castro was also there, as an

engineering student. Plus the fight of the tobacco workers was also here. All of this influenced me. It is my neighborhood.¹⁶

Leaders express their desire to give back to the community, as Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym (2009) explains: “I was a very poor kid from an immigrant family. I was raised in the streets by an Italian family [...]. I thank the friends of my childhood and my mother and my grandmother to make me an honest person and see the good part of society. I owe this to the neighborhood.” Residents get involved because they want to see the neighborhood come back. In the particular case of Jaime, the name he and his youth chose for the community gym is particularly revealing: “Quiero a mi Barrio” (I Love my Neighborhood). Alice, an environmental organizer in Dudley (2009) expresses a similar sense of responsibility: “It was my community, it was the only community I knew. I mean I grew up there, my parents still lived there. I had great times there. So how can you not do anything? That was home for me [...]. You know, when you see something is not right you have to address it.” In that sense, place and place attachments are motivators not only in communities responding to contamination (Edelstein, 2003), but also in neighborhoods organizing for long term improvements. Place attachment together with a heightened sense of responsibility triggers community action.

The commitment to help residents live in a better environment is long-lasting both for recently arrived migrants and for long-time residents. Drew Forster from the Croc Foundation in Boston (2009) illustrates this broad commitment:

“The number of people who have done just that -- who have gone to Ivy league schools, have gone to work in corporate America and decided ‘you know what, my neighborhood matters that much to me and what is going on in my neighborhood matters that much to me that I am going to apply my skills or I am just going to choose to keep living in this neighborhood even though I could go to another maybe more fashionable neighborhood.’ They are young urban professionals, educated, they have the capacity to go move to Cambridge, or JP, move to the suburbs if they wanted to. But many of them, not all, but many of them choose to stay.”

For those residents, their moral values are embodied in taking care of their neighborhood. In Barcelona, Hubertus Poppinhaus, a social architect in Barcelona (2009), explains the deep sense of responsibility that older residents feel for the Casc Antic:

“Today people defend the old town much more than twenty years ago. Twenty years ago, many people were thinking that the old town was just a part of the city that should be taken down, and people were not very convinced of other ways, and they were not defending it either. [...] Before no single house was rehabilitated in the old town [...]. People could not imagine it, but now with all this care? Now it is true that people value their neighborhood much more.”

¹⁶ At that time, Cayo Hueso was at the center of social demonstrations, student movements, and revolutionary actions – Spanish descendents or Afro Cubans. José Martí, the revolutionary philosopher and planner of the Independence War, lived in Cayo Hueso for many years (Bartolomé Barqués. 2004) During the first half of the XXth century, many guesthouses hosted university students who organized protests against the governments of the Cuban Republic (Díaz, 2002). One of those protests, led by the student Rafael Trejo, took place in 1930, and resulted in his killing by the police. In 1951, Castro himself was elected Delegate of the Orthodox party in Cayo Hueso and launched his assault towards the Moncada barracks from there in 1953 (Díaz 2001).

Residents have been motivated to become more involved in the Casc Antic once they saw positive changes for them.

People's sense of responsibility vis-à-vis their neighborhood is illustrated by the fact that many residents remained in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, or Casc Antic, even if they point out that they could have left. For instance, black middle-class residents in Roxbury have not fled Dudley for the suburbs. Middle-class black residents have solid economic resources – in 2001, Roxbury residents had \$430 million dollars in retirement accounts (Jennings, 2007). In return, the middle-income black residents have served as a central asset to increase Dudley's economic stability, social cohesion, and political mobilization. Black middle-income leaders have mobilized other residents to participate in neighborhood projects and organizations, and cultivated positive attitudes and civic energy within the community. Their civic capacity has been a mobilizing factor and proved that public officials' calls for increasing social capital in inner city neighborhoods does not reflect the reality of such neighborhoods (Jennings, 2007). In Barcelona, residents could have also left for nearby affordable neighborhoods such as the Barceloneta or for affordable suburbs, but they chose and fought to stay. Last in Cuba, residents are more bound physically to their neighborhood because of the impossibility to sell a house or apartment. However, the government allows "permutas," which is a system of private exchange of houses and residents between Cubans that Cayo Hueso residents can also engage in. Many Cubans have also tried and managed to simply leave the island, as several residents point out.

Residents in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso are especially concerned about improving the future of kids and youth growing up in the neighborhood. Building a different quality of life for them acts as a strong motivator for staying in the neighborhood and focusing on environmental and health projects. Each neighborhood has a large population of younger residents, and the strong connection that leaders feel towards the neighborhood makes them want to build the best for kids. As Brandy Cruthird, the owner of the Body by Brandy gym (2010), states: "I'm from here, I've been here a long time, and I think our kids need to see us investing in our own neighborhoods." Seeing kids developing beautifully thanks to improvements in parks, playgrounds, and opportunities for healthier living makes residents particularly thrilled and satisfied of their work. In Cayo Hueso, Cristián, the organizer of martial arts classes (2009), explains his own perspective and personal satisfaction:

"I am involved because this project attracts many kids from the street. We take kids away from bad things and from being in the streets. It is a way to educate kids who have a problem of conduct at school. We are working with them educating their mentality. Their quality of life starts to improve. Their health is more favorable."

People's engagement is connected to the joy they feel upon seeing kids' excitement. Among all neighborhoods, Cayo Hueso is the place that puts most emphasis on kids well-being and health, which is reflected in projects such as the Quiero a mi Barrio gym, the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, the martial arts classes from Cristián, the green map with kids, or the colorful Callejón de Hamel.

In a more abstract way, residents and organizations emphasize the importance of the right to recreation and right to play, as part of children's development. Manolo, a community garden volunteer and earlier participant in the Forat fights (2009), explains: "I was supporting them [the people fighting in the forat] because I did not like the idea of a parking. To see twenty dummies come and park the City of Barcelona's cars and others get money, no. And what about the kids?"

Closed up at home? Come on, get rid of the parking, and put a park for the kids to play there.” In neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley where parents often work two or three jobs and kids spend a lot of time outside on their own, giving children the opportunity to participate in sport activities or play in neighborhood parks is seen as an important support structure for the whole community. Parents express a strong sense of protection when they see their children play just outside the house without a need for constant supervision. For instance, Jose Barros (2009) explains:

“Right now we have a lot of playgrounds and people don't have to leave their communities. So you can take them to your community. And I remember those who didn't have a car couldn't go. You couldn't take your child to South Boston because if you don't drive you don't have a car so. Right now you can just sit, and through your window while you are cooking you might have your kids playing outside.”

Each neighborhood offers improved recreational conditions for kids and youth thanks to the demands and works of local activists.

3.1.3 Personal growth and feelings of appreciation through community action

Residents involved in environmental projects feel a sense of personal growth in their actions. Their work for the neighborhood provides them with strong emotional fulfillment, and in turn, reinforces their activism and attachment to their place. As a grower in Havana (2009) expresses, “I dedicate so much time to gardening because it is a hobby, it is a recreation.” Residents emphasize their commitment to taking care of the neighborhood and beautify it for the residents, as well as for outsiders. They cannot stand to see their place neglected. Manolo, a volunteer in the Casc Antic garden (2009), states his pride and satisfaction: “I see that everything is nicely planted and nicely taken care of, and that people – because many people stop by and see this – are happy [...] They come from very far and take many pictures, because I think that this serves as an example, as well maintained as it is now.” Environmental improvements give the neighborhood a sense of modernity, which contributes to improving the image that residents have of it. In Boston, Jose Barros from DSNI (2009) explains:

“I think [we focused so much on the environmental side and the green part of it] it's because we always wanted the best for the community. We never settled for cheap things. So if we are building a playground we want something that lasts. We always ask for something that lasts, that has value. So we can feel proud of it. I envision Dudley as a place people coming to Boston, people say you've got to go there.”

Environmental projects thus represent a means to showcase the neighborhood and make it welcoming.

Activists express strong satisfaction in receiving appreciation for their work and seeing other people benefiting from it. Their accounts reveal a commitment to sharing with and helping others, as noted by Mohammed, a volunteer in the Barcelona community garden, who emphasizes that he enjoys growing his own food and working in gardens, but also engages in such activities because he perceives them as a social service for the community, particularly for poorer residents. Khadeja, a Moroccan woman who has often cooked couscous for the residents working in the garden (2009), appreciates the affection and love she receives in return for her work: “I find myself lonely here. I like to get together with people. I want affection. [...] They called me to do a cuscus. [...] Everyone applauded me. I was thrilled.” Cristián, the martial arts teacher in Cayo Hueso (2009), expresses a similar motivation: “Sometimes, some of them are a

bit difficult, but if the quality of the work is good. Some kids are shy, others are more daring. They give you affection. I love the kids. It feels like you are another kid when you are with them. It is something radiant to see how they learn.” Often times, the personal trajectory of residents reflects habits of volunteering and community work, which was part of their life in a previous city or country (i.e. Columbia or Italy before coming to Barcelona).

Residents also relate their satisfaction of learning new skills and creating new challenges for themselves in all neighborhoods. This is the case of Maria who organizes environmental workshops in the Casc Antic community garden (2009): “I don’t have much knowledge of horticulture, but for me every activity is a challenge, because I have to prepare it as it is something new, you know.” Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym in Havana (2009) summarizes similar feelings of personal achievement:

“I achieved a goal. I dreamed that this part in the front of the locale would be a big place for sports. There were a lot of bags of stuff. I dreamed about something like this since I was little. It is now a dream that is converted into reality. I have realized myself in a project. This is the most important to me. I have given help to the neighborhood, community, and helped it get out of its daily problems. It gives a possibility of liberation, expansion and gives energy for the difficulties.”

Altruism and solidarity are here the initial motivations for action, and the neighborhood is a segue for residents to express their vocation and serve the community. Leaders feel gratified by seeing residents benefiting from and respecting environmental improvements, which further motivates them to continue their work.

Often times, participating in environmental projects help residents and workers integrate in the neighborhood as newcomers. Through an engagement in local initiatives, people get to know others in the projects and share experiences and stories that arise from a common and continued involvement in local environmental action. This involvement builds a stronger solidarity and interconnection between participants. It is also a way to implement in practice beliefs and values that drive their actions in life. People even feel that they are living a trajectory and that they form part of a broader movement in which things do not happen in isolation. Jess Liborio from The Food Project (2009) expresses this sentiment: “Collaborating with [DSNI] and being part of a neighborhood that is already organizing around so many issues is good. You know, and because of all the white flight and vacancy I think there is space here. You know, where it’s like more than one house lot.” People feel as active agents of the geographic space in which they live or work, especially since their neighborhood is undergoing so many changes.

Lastly, the neighborhood scale allows some activists to manifest their commitment to environmental projects and urban nature. They express their joy and satisfaction of being able to realize their environmental ambitions in the Casc Antic, Cayo Hueso, and Dudley. People dedicate much time to the community gardens, urban farms, environmental education work, sports activity coordination, or organization of recreational activities because they truly care about the environment in the city and about improving local livability. Taking care of trees and plants, seeing them grow, improving the general greenery of the space, and maintaining community spaces make people feel accomplished. Kids and young people involving themselves in projects also find great pleasure in working in the gardens or in leading others through neighborhood clean-ups. It gives them a sense of freedom and communion with nature, as Alexandria King from The Food Project (2009) explains: “I love the wilderness, I love being

outdoors, I love to release through nature. And so, actually I rather release into nature what I feel and have it answer back. It's a reciprocal relationship being in the wilderness. You know what you respect is able to give you that same respect back.” In other words, leaders and activists in Dudley, Cayo Hueso and Casc Antic apply their broader environmental values and commitments to the neighborhood. They very much emphasize the scenery and beauty in the different parks, playgrounds, or garden projects, which they see as a retreat, a quiet space for the neighbors, and a place to protect as good stewards of the neighborhood and the environment in it.

In sum, in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic and Dudley, active residents, leaders, and workers feel a strong sense of connection, belonging, and attachment to the history, assets, patrimony as well as groups of the neighborhood. This feeling of living among a tight-knit community has motivated them to take action to improve the environmental quality of the place. This motivation is strengthened by a deeper sense of responsibility towards the city, the local residents, and the youth groups living in it. In Barcelona, activists put much emphasis on their responsibility towards the city itself as good citizens, while residents in Cayo Hueso emphasize the importance of youth and children development, and residents in Dudley display greater commitment to all vulnerable groups in the neighborhood. Such a dedication also stems from a desire to accomplish personal goals of volunteering, learning, self-dedication, solidarity, and altruism.

3.2 Holistic revitalization of degraded neighborhoods

All together, these values and meanings that activists assign to their action lead them to a continued involvement in environmental actions and a holistic revitalization of a degraded neighborhood, which eventually allows them to achieve greater environmental justice. The recent decades of community-based revitalization of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso reveal that improving the livability and environmental quality of distressed and marginalized neighborhoods involves a holistic commitment around the revitalization of places and spaces where low-income and minority residents live, learn, work, and play all together. From a realization of the neighborhood decay and of residents’ need, activists have taken action in a wide variety of complementary domains which feed on each other and reflect a natural evolution and a continuum in the mind of activists. They form the concrete aspects of urban environmental justice together with local community development work (See Figure 10 below).

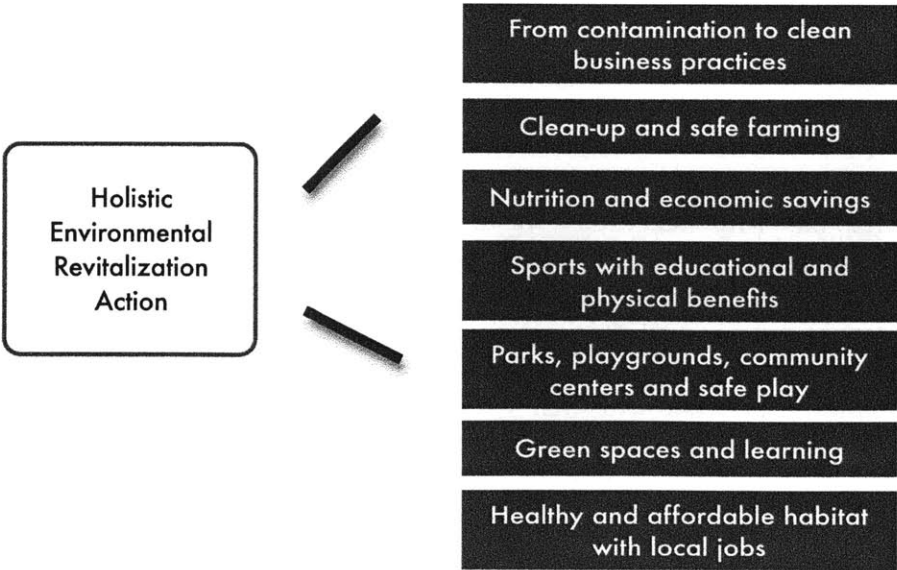


Figure 10: Components and Characteristics of Holistic Environmental Revitalization Action

3.2.1 Comprehensive physical health benefits

Clean-up and maintenance were parts of an initial stage of neighborhood revitalization work across neighborhoods, and are still part of ongoing long-term monitoring and care. In Dudley, for instance, residents had to initially fight trash dumping and arsons – and the health consequences of exposure to contaminants – before moving to issues of food security, parks and playground development, construction of community centers, and healthy housing. Alice Gomes, an early environmental organizer in Dudley (2009), explains the urgency of the situation residents had to deal with: “I didn't have any professional background or anything, but I think when Olivia's son got bitten by something, they didn't know what it was and got sick. And I think that was a red flag. And I myself, I had asthma back then and my asthma seemed to be getting worse and worse.” Improving neighborhood environmental conditions in Dudley was a two-tier process – from cleaning-up and putting an end to dumping, to making the government monitor trash dumping, ensuring the legality of waste management businesses, and now working with business owners to create sustainable best practices for waste management. It is about emphasizing economic activities compatible with a safe urban environment and urban neighborhood.

Neighborhood clean-up and monitoring of health issues linked to environmental problems have also been part of a long term dedication of community residents in Cayo Hueso, and part of a desire to bring holistic benefits to the neighborhood. Pablo of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña (2009) explains the role of the clean-up brigade he and Rosa coordinate with local residents:

“[Participants in the brigade] go to houses to verify the state of the water tanks, to put water into the toilet, and verify that the tanks are very well in place. This is because when focal points of dengue appeared, there was not enough public health support against the transmitting agents. We also went to a few parks. Kids are responsible for the cleaning around the organopónico, around the Casa and around the Malecón. The benefits of such a work is that the neighborhood is cleaner, there are fewer diseases.”

As in Dudley and Barcelona, community leaders take charge for the broader maintenance of the neighborhood and the clean-up of public areas.

Environmental and health initiatives are tightly connected to each other as part of a comprehensive and holistic endeavor. Trish Settles, a former environmental organizer within DSNi (2009), explains her long term vision for Dudley and the natural progression and continuum from one issue to the other:

“I started out with hazardous waste sites, but you can't stop there because the disproportionate burden trickles over. And as I started talking about asthma and then kids can't go to school so parents can't get to their jobs, it became an economic development issue. And the lead poisoning in the houses became a housing issue because we want quality housing. And then it became an energy issue: you talked about building housing with quality materials and designs so that the energy cost wasn't a burden later. Definitely environmental justice, I've talked to different

colleges and conferences about is it's much more than just open spaces and pollution. Especially in an urban area where it all comes together.”

Clean-up and urban agriculture were also very strongly connected to each other, as many gardeners fought for their gardens to be safe. Consequently, organizations such as Food Project and ACE worked with gardeners to improve the safety of the soil. Today, they still provide residents with free compost and build raised beds.

Over time, environmental and health projects have brought a wide range of comprehensive physical health benefits. In Boston and Havana, poor residents have gained access to healthy and fresh food. Organizations such as The Food Project or the Haley House and community garden organizers contribute to improving community health. Alexandria King from The Food Project (2009) emphasizes the multiple benefits for families who buy at the farmers’ market in Dudley:

“You can go down the street on Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30 - 7:00 and get yourself delicious, some of the best produce, it's organic, it's locally grown. And you can actually get great benefit from that. I think in addition to that they are partnering with the food stamps, the Department of Transitional Assistance to provide double the amount of food for anyone who is using their food stamp card.”

The monetary benefits of community gardens are also consequent, as Betty Johnson from the South End Land Trust in Boston (2009) explains: “They usually are gardened by people from low to middle income families who use what they grow to supplement the food increase. We did a study last year that there is about 1.2 or 1.3 million dollars worth of food grown in the 150 gardens. That's almost, about \$400 per plot.” In such a food desert like Dudley, people are able to feed themselves and sometimes their extended families and save on the cost of groceries they would otherwise have to buy. A healthy nutrition is associated with food affordability.

The development of permaculture and of the organóponico in Cayo Hueso responds to similar needs of addressing nutrition shortages, in a period of intense economic crisis. Rosa (2009) underlines the meaning of her advocacy work to create an urban farm in Cayo Hueso:

“I was the one what had the idea of the organóponico. Things were started with permaculture. With the crisis, raising some animals and urban agriculture was permitted. Everyone started to do this. Residents were given pieces of land so that they could build a house and a garden. Soil was also given, in Playa now. This was in order to get cheaper vegetables and to get more affordable food. We proposed this to the delegate of Urban Agriculture because were concerned about the creation of the organóponico.”

In Barcelona, where local fresh markets are found in numerous places in the city, providing fresh and healthy local food to poor residents has not been the strong focus of residents. Up to recently, community gardens have rather served as a demonstration site for residents to grow their own food and for kids and youth to learn how to improve their nutrition habits. That said, this situation has started to change with the creation of organizations and projects in the Casc Antic such as Mescladis and the Xarxa de Consum Solidari which emphasize the production and consumption of more environmentally sustainable and socially just local food.

3.2.2 Youth access to outdoor parks, recreational facilities, and community centers

Increasing the access of kids and youth to community centers, sports grounds, and gyms is a core component of residents' work and mobilization in all three neighborhoods. Sports is a way to enhance physical health outcome and, in Boston and Barcelona in particular, address obesity threats and improve overall physical conditions, as the mission of AECCA in the Casc Antic clearly states: AECCA works to "protect against the diseases caused by lack of exercise, strengthen the immunological system, improve quality of life, and raise greater awareness of our body." In Boston, obesity is more than a threat, it is rather omnipresent in Dudley's kids and is associated with increased diabetes rates and asthma. Leaders such as Brandy from the Body and Brandy gym (2010) opened gyms because "there was no gym in the area and many populations of color have health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart problems." Programs like hers also compensate for the fact that local schools have cut physical activity programs and replaced them with standardized test preparation practices.

Similar goals of enhancing children's access to physical activity are expressed by community leaders in Havana who develop sports classes for kids. Cristián, the martial arts teacher in Cayo Hueso (2009), explains the benefits of his classes for the local youth: "They leave school at 4.30 and come here to do sports at 5pm. Their quality of life starts to improve. Their health is more favorable. We explain to them that they must not smoke, we work so that their nutrition is better they lower their bread consumption." In the same way, Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym (2009) emphasizes the holistic approach of his work:

"I receive 400 youths per day to do exercise. We help them. We get them out of the street. We save them a little bit. They take care of their health and their physical condition. In the educative aspect, we have workshops and discussions and seminars, based on what we can do. We look at how a sedentary individual can end up in comparison with one that does physical activity: obesity, high blood pressure, arthritis, etc."

Much focus is given to the individual needs, overall well being, and physical health concerns of participants.

Last, environmental justice in Cayo Hueso Dudley, and Havana is tied to offering new spaces for kids to relax and play safely and in peace. In dense and heavily trafficked neighborhoods, kids in the three neighborhoods did not use to have decent recreational opportunities, were often confined at home in front of the TV and computer, or played in unsafe outdoor spaces. Much emphasis has thus been put by community leaders and organizations on increasing the number of community centers and playgrounds for them. A space such as the Convent de Sant Agusti center in Barcelona offers comprehensive benefits for local kids, as explained by Jordi Fabregas, its director (2009):

"If we think about the environmental as a space, often times, of quietness in the sense that we are in a gothic cloister which is [...] a space of silence in the neighborhood. It is also a space of playing for kids, and has often times converted in this. Parents get their kids from school and come here. The kids play here in the playground area for kids while the parents are in the bar drinking a café."

All these new places provide new spaces for residents to feel comfortable, at ease, and socialize.

Similarly, new playgrounds encourage kids to play outside freely in Dudley. In that sense, open space and parks are relevant projects in marginalized neighborhoods when they include fields and play equipment for kids and provide them a dynamic balance between recreation, environmental quality, and physical activity. Other open space revitalization projects, such as the Boston Schoolyard Initiative, combine educational with environmental and recreational goals, and help kids build a new relation to their space. According to the coordinator of the BSI (2010), schoolyards are a both public park and an outdoor classroom while providing the place with a new identity and bringing nature into the urban context. Kids can build an intimate relation with nature, are offered new opportunities for active play during outdoor recess, which ultimately changes the relation that kids have with schools, learning, and with their neighborhood.

Last, new multi-purpose facilities such as the one built by the Croc Foundation and Project Right in Dudley also bring in new recreational activities for kids and adolescents and remediate the absence of large community centers in the neighborhood. In Havana, places such as the Casa del Niño y de la Niña and as well as improvements brought to existing parks (i.e. tree planting, playground equipment, and safer access to the parks) has also enhanced recreational and play opportunities for kids. In such a heavily populated city like Havana, working on playground and park access enhances environmental justice for kids and youth.

3.2.3 A healthy and affordable habitat

Community organizations and residents in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso have dedicated much attention to the environmental rehabilitation of buildings through improvements in housing structure, safety and, sanitation, as a way to fight neighborhood degradation and improve livability for residents. In Barcelona, residents have successfully fought for upgrades in sanitation and water delivery systems in old buildings and for the construction of new healthy and affordable housing and public housing buildings for low-income families based on existing structures. Such renovations have been strongly pushed for by activists from Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella, who connect their emphasis on saving buildings and rehabbing them to acting for environmental sustainability, as renovations consume less energy and materials than tearing buildings down and rebuilding them from scratch.

Several core actors have undertaken renovations and structural improvements. In the Casc Antic, cooperatives of neighbors such as the Cooperativa Porfont, which was created by the Neighbors' Association of the Casc Antic, have carried out numerous renovations and preservations of older buildings on land that they purchased at lower cost from the municipality, as Oscar Martínez from Porfont (2009) explains:

“With the time passing, we also focused on restoration since there were so little empty land [...] What needs to be done is to renovate old buildings, convert them fully in new ones, give them conditions because many of the buildings out there don't even have elevators, the staircases are tiny, and the water pipes and electricity networks are very old and need to be fully renovated. The structure is also in very bad state because many are made of wood [...]. It improves the global quality of the neighborhood because, what it achieved is that the neighbors and their kids, who were born here, can continue to live in the neighborhood, and remain integrated in it.”

Often times, the bottom floors of these buildings are occupied by traditional shops, community centers, by the headquarters of residents' associations, or even small sports centers or daycares. In that sense, the new projects are sustainable from a social, economic, cultural and environmental standpoint. In Havana, the renovation of the *ciudadela Espada 411* followed similar principles of improving the environmental safety and conditions for residents, providing green spaces in the common areas, and, overall, improving residents' quality of life. Parallel endeavors were undertaken by Salvador and Elias in their work of rehabbing the *Callejón de Hamel* in Cayo Hueso, as Salvador unified neighbors and provided them with resources to improve sanitation, water pipes, and other structural conditions of degraded buildings.

Much attention has been given recently towards developing green housing and renovating buildings with higher energy efficiency standards and with integrated green spaces. This is particularly the case in Dudley, as explained by Jeanne Dubois of Dorchester Bay Development Corporation (2009):

"I would say that of all our projects wherever we could possibly create playgrounds or create space, we would. Wherever we could do environmental upgrades, now especially in the last ten years, there was a green Community Development Corporation initiative ten years ago and we have gotten resources to use energy efficiency in our buildings. Now the new projects that we are working on here around this Quincy corridor are going to be LEED-certified green buildings. So what you are seeing in the whole CDC industry is a complete change into green construction. You know green materials, solar panels, green roofs, energy efficiency."

Such projects improve the economic wealth of residents while enhancing their quality of life, as weatherizing and energy efficiency projects involve the provision of green jobs for residents.

For some leaders, providing quality affordable housing is the ultimate goal of environmental justice as Penn Loh from ACE (2009) explains:

"We realized very clearly at that time that if we improve the environment, if we actually clean up the air, get good transit, if we get safe parks and green spaces, you know all the good environmental justice stuff and we haven't done anything to address housing [...] so that they can afford to stay, then we would only be exasperating the displacement of lower income folks. And so that would be the ultimate tragedy is that people fight to revitalize their neighborhoods, and then they can't afford to stay and they end up having to move to more marginalized areas that are less expensive but don't have all the same things that they fought for in their neighborhood after having live there through all the really difficult times you know."

Activists realized the importance of focusing on right to affordable housing as part of their EJ agenda. Through the adaptation of ACE's strategies to the neighborhood changing reality, residents are supported in their efforts to remain in Dudley.

In the minds of community activists, environmental justice includes different components, with an ultimate goal of urban sustainability and a real balance stricken between environmental care, economic development, and social protection. Penn Loh, ACE's former Executive Director (2009), emphasizes the importance of proactive long-term fights for local sustainability in marginalized neighborhoods:

"We definitely think that there are some who see the EJ movement as being purely reactive. And only dealing with the environmental bads. [...] The solutions and what

groups that have stayed in power over time have gone on to do is actually promote the long term systemic solutions. Preventive solutions, you know, the ones that don't put the problem on to the next least powerful group. And that's why, I think politically that's why environmental justice was called environmental justice because it helps environmental equity. [...]. So the idea that environmental justice, the flip side of environmental injustice is sustainable development or sustainability.”

The two concepts are clearly tightly connected.

In sum, the different initiatives in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic have played a comprehensive role in transforming the environmental and health conditions of the neighborhood and increasing residents' quality of life. Activists have tied environment and health together and worked to bring in tangible changes, which themselves triggered numerous ripple and snowball effects over time. Revitalizing environmental and health conditions in the neighborhood means to conceive change in a holistic and transformative way and think about habitat more broadly. A project such as the Green Map in Cayo Hueso ties these elements together by including cultural sites, green spaces, urban agriculture, historical houses, and health centers in the map. The habitat is not only where people live inside doors, it is also the outside conditions that influence the life inside closed doors. In other words, active residents and leaders of marginalized urban neighborhoods do not think in a segmented way. Trish, a former organizer in DSNI (2009), emphasizes the importance of thinking holistically:

“I would say with the urban agriculture, it was always there but at some point it doesn't become there until it hits a certain plateau or somebody can piece all of that together to make a story out of it. So being able to link all those different pieces of community, draw from those connections not only for themselves [...] but also for the residents in the neighborhood. If the residents have a common understanding of the issues that are out there, ‘well yes we do need housing, yes we do need to protect our open spaces, yes we do have a soil contamination problem but we can address these if we all work together.’”

People thus anchor projects in one area of ‘green’ environmental justice, but their endeavor is a stepping stone towards planning other related environmental initiatives, as well as broader community development projects. Those different projects feed on each other and reflect a natural continuum from one project and one domain to the other.

3.3 Creating safe havens and nurturing the community

Community initiatives in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso are comprehensive, holistic, and visionary. However, individuals and groups also act more deeply to shape and re-shape their environments in their daily behavior and use this environment to formulate and negotiate other claims (Manzo, 2003). Their projects reflect a deeper, symbolic, and ultimate commitment to re-creating a place for residents, developing “safe havens”, and nurturing the community. “Community” is being reshaped and reconstructed through mobilization.

3.3.1 Fights against destruction, grief, and loss

Active residents, community leaders, and local organizations coalescing around environmental and health projects are moved by a strong feeling of nostalgia towards an

idealized past with its traditional social fabric, inter-personal relations, and community life. The accounts of many activists in Barcelona, Havana, and Boston reveal their desire to bring this past back and recreate the community as it was ten, twenty, or thirty years ago. In Barcelona, this nostalgia is more pronounced than in Havana or Boston because of the deep urban changes experienced in the old town and the destruction of older buildings. Neighbors remember the old shops they used to go to (the pharmacy, the bakery, etc) that have disappeared in the Born area of Casc Antic. As Enrique Ibañez from the Associació de Veïns en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella (2009) explains:

“In some parts, the old town changed a lot, it has nothing to do with what it used to be. All around the market, there were small stores, everything was a neighborhood life, no? Which is what I like. This neighborhood life, with its small streets, all mysterious streets in which people were walking. Obviously, now, there are very few small streets remaining.”

People feel lost in the “new” neighborhood and have lost physical and mental markers.

Often times, the engagement of activists stems from the value they assign to the built and non-built patrimony of the neighborhood. This is particularly true in the Casc Antic and Cayo Hueso. In the Casc Antic, local engagement is also strongly connected to the community rebuilding that occurred during the Forat de la Vergonya fights and construction of new park, playgrounds, and community gardens. Activists fought against the destruction of the old center and also vied to preserve close community relations and the traditional social fabric of the place. Rebuilding the Forat was a way to cultivate ties and strengthen existing relations between neighbors. Joan, a long-time community activist (2009), explains his feelings: “[We fought for protecting the territory” because it was for the street, for your neighbors with whom you’ve lived your old life, your friends, your environment, your space, your real space, what you have lived.” Monica, a squatter (2009), shares similar feelings: “[it was important to preserve and protect] the desires to be together, the living together, the spending time together, and getting to know each other.” In Havana, an Ex-Director from the Group for the Comprehensive Development of the Capital (GDIC) (2009) explains similar visions of strengthening local traditions:

“The institutional structures did not reach the base and did not know in depth the problems of the base, so they did not know its potentialities either. There were immobilized resources [...]. In Cayo Hueso, there is a very valuable intangible patrimony, from the point of view of the music, genuine expressions of Cuban music, which were born there.”

In addition, Cayo Hueso also hosts a number of painters, artisans, and traditional professions.

The accounts of residents, leaders, and community workers reveal strong references to notions of destruction and war. Many of them tell the story of their neighborhood formerly looking like a war zone, full of crumbling buildings, waste, rodents or insects, and victim of municipal violence towards the residents. In Barcelona, the slow environmental degradation of the neighborhood and the mobbing that residents had to suffer contributed to this impression of devastated area, which was reinforced by the destruction of the first community gardens and parks by city vehicles. These feelings are also connected to the demolition of buildings and abandonment of debris in the Forat. As Joan, an activist (2009), recalls: “[The Forat] was a completely devastated area, and [...] the neighborhoods had to swallow all of this filth and the whole day bearing it. [...] It was a real degradation, like a bomb attack, you know, as if a war

had gone through. It was an infect thing really.” The name Forat de la Vergonya – Hole of Shame – was particularly appropriate to describe the conditions in which neighbors lived.

Residents’ accounts reveal the presence of direct confrontation and destruction. In the Casc Antic, for instance, the Forat fights were seen as a true urban guerilla due to the violence, broken windows, people climbing on buildings, fire, screaming, rocket launchers, and destruction which took place between 2000 and 2006. Furthermore, part of the neighborhood was closed off by the police for a month and city contractors constructed a tall wall around the Forat to prevent the neighbors from accessing the place. People felt prisoners of their own space and physically and mentally restrained. When residents took down the wall, they compared it to the Berlin liberation in 1989. At that time, neighbors also got arrested, which reinforced residents’ fear and angers, and gave the impression of a no-go zone. Some of the signs protesters put up “Stop the violence against the neighbors. Put a park in the Forat de la Vergonya” directly fought these conditions.

Impressions of war zone and urban guerillas in Dudley stem from the permanent arsons and dumping that occurred in the 1980s and that annihilated the neighborhood. Jose Barros, an early community activist in Dudley (2009), expresses his views on these years:

“We realized that there were things that weren't normal -- the dumping, the trash, the empty lanes, burning houses every night. And going to bed and your house getting on fire overnight. Because people were setting them on fire. So those were situations that we were facing in those days, that we had to do something about it to stop it.”

Trauma surged from the arsons and the sounds of sirens, screams of residents escaping flames, and firemen storming through Dudley. In parallel, at that time, crime rates and street violence were very high and neighbors were often afraid of leaving their house alone or letting their children play on the streets unwatched. The creation of the busing system during de-segregation extended the violence, as explained Charlotte Kahn, one of the founders of Boston Urban Gardeners (2009): “There was a lot of violence, people were killed, there was tremendous tension, real turmoil. And there is still a lot of scars from that period.” Absence of law and order were also characteristic of this period and reminiscent of war scenes, as explains early organizer Alice Gomes: “And one of the problems that we were having was the transfers of the trash. And people just coming in and dumping trash in our neighborhoods. And with no penalty.” As she explains, there was no law or order in Dudley. It was daily chaos.

In Cayo Hueso, activists put less emphasis on fighting against a war in the neighborhood, but still present accounts of neighborhood devastation and building and infrastructure collapse. An Ex-Director from the GDIC (2009) explains:

“There are problems with the bad state of the constructions, the danger of collapse. There are often partial collapses with partial detachments from the roof. [...] There are also problems with water provision, that is the residents have very old hydraulic and sanitation systems. [...] You walk through the streets and you see the black water running, because these are networks that were built in the first half of the XXth century.”

Here, many residents live in transitional shelters after having had to abandon their crumbling house. The destructions through the urban renewal plan in Cayo Hueso in the 1970s have also triggered feelings of alienation and loss for the population. As Miguel Coyula, a GDIC architect (2009), explains: “The problem is that the skyscrapers created anonymity. [...] I knew neighbors

from Cayo Hueso whose point of reference was the street and now they live on the eleventh floor without a balcony. Once, I arrived in one of those buildings and found a couch in a hallway, outside the house". Similarly to Boston and Barcelona, the deterioration of Cayo Hueso brought alienation with it. Elias, one of the leaders of the Callejón de Hamel revitalization project (2009), explains the deteriorated state of streets before the renovation project: "Salvador's work produced a noise. It used to be a very dirty cul de sac, very destroyed. It would make you cry to see how it was." Residents felt shameful and uncomfortable about their place.

Such destructions and abandonment have triggered feelings of personal and collective loss and confusion over where one belongs in all three neighborhoods. In the Casc Antic, the amount of expropriations gave residents the impression of massive deportations. When the municipality took buildings down in the Forat, streets disappeared. People nostalgically point at the name of neighborhood streets, as memories of the former traditional activities that used to thrive in Casc Antic, such as furniture builders, carpenters, ironworks shops, watchmakers, etc. People felt violated in their soul and life, and they relate the destruction of buildings and the state of emptiness in the Forat as a loss of memory. Their minds can be compared to the mind of a person with Alzheimer's disease or psychosis. As M.A. Santos, a Project Manager for the City of Barcelona (2009), explains: "Yes, there has been a lot of people hurt, and so it is very complicated when you get immersed in issues of suffering, of feelings of being aggressed. This, in the end, makes the situation be a little bit violent because the response is almost emotional." Urban changes also signified changes in the composition of the population and losses of traditional social fabric and social capital for traditional residents. Enrique Ibañez, a Casc Antic activist (2009), explains this multifaceted loss: "They [the municipality] has destroyed all this network of affection and relations. Plus, when you are being taken out of your environment and you are elderly, usually you suffer a lot because usually you have Manel here and Angelita there." Social markers have been shattered, which is particularly problematic for elderly and other more isolated residents.

The neighborhood degradation has also led youth groups to express that they do not know where they belong any more, nor how to use the space, especially in Boston and Barcelona. In the Casc Antic, they feel mentally displaced from a neighborhood they used to experience in a different way and feel sense of emptiness between who they are and the crisp modernity that the City is promoting. In Boston, community leaders often make similar observations of youth feeling disconnected from the city and their neighborhood and not having a true sense of rootedness. Consequently, in their work, activists make sure that they do not take any asset or point of reference away from the traditional lives of young residents, as Drew Forster from the Croc Foundation (2009) emphasizes:

"That is another key value in the planning process was we don't want to put in a six lane lap pool, which would then give the city an excuse to shut down the Mason pool. It's a city owned pool. We want to look truly at the assets this community has and then complement what is there and add to what's there and not duplicate, take away from and sort of diminish what is already there."

The foundation wants to ensure that existing values and assets remain in Dudley.

Those impressions of displacement are strongly connected to fear of erasure from the neighborhood and city. People feel dispossessed of their own neighborhood and city and express a need of protection and nurturing. People are disoriented because their common markers of

reference have been erased and their appropriation of the space affected. Nelson Merced, the first director of Alianza Hispana, a community organization in Dudley (2009), explains this fear: "You know it was a real fear. It wasn't a fictitious fear. It was a fear that people saw, they had seen the consequences of when the city and state decide to do something. And so they, you know, I think they were highly aware of that possibility and decided that they were going to continue to take action." In Barcelona, Chema Falconetti, a movie director supporting the residents in the Casc Antic (2009), explains his fears:

"There is a lot of misery and tensions, but this is also a much richer world than they [public officials] want to establish. They wanted to create a new identity by erasing the plaza. The space in which you live would convert in an empty hole, in nothing.

Even though it was 500 years old and this is where your grandfather used to live."

Esperanza, a Dominican immigrant living in the Casc Antic (2009), expresses similar anxieties: "Even though you are an immigrant, you want things to improve. It is a question of coexistence. It is a neighborhood, which, if you starting looking at it, will disappear. But if we occupy it, it will be our home." Residents are aware that they can play a role to protect their new home.

In sum, the accounts of activists reveal the presence of traumatic and grief experiences for neighborhood families and individuals, and this particularly in the Casc Antic and Dudley. In Cayo Hueso, urban developments were not as radical and traumatic. Trauma was here more connected to feelings about the slow devastation of the place and possible disappearance of Afrocuban culture and practices due to the regime policies or peoples' preconceived opinions.

Consequently, community fights for environmental quality and health improvements were a direct response to these destructions, losses, and fears of erasure. As Charlotte Kahn from Boston Urban Gardeners (2009) explains: "The gardens grew out of that tumult. And they really did, you know, bring forward lots of people who weren't part of the, in a way, the visible landscape. You know because they were just in their apartments scared a lot." In Barcelona, residents countered the Forat destructions by creating a permanent space. Eva, a social architect who actively participated in the Forat fights (2009), explains her own beliefs in building parks and community gardens: "I became interested in the theme because I believe in doing things with people, with all the complexity and complications this brings. I want to leave a trace." The 2002 Manifest for a Green Old Town and Without Urban Speculation "We believe that a popular initiative to defend a green area from the threat of speculative projects and to humanize an urban space devastated by the massive and indiscriminatory destructions deserves respect from the public institutions" is even clearer in explaining the meaning and of the new space.

Fighting for environmental improvements is tied to the protection of traditional activities. In Barcelona, for instance, after the Forat fights, active neighbors and environmental NGOs successfully negotiated with the City the creation of a community recycling center which would be managed by a *trapero* (literally a "junkman"), which used to be a formal traditional profession in the Casc Antic. In addition, creating a new large green area in the Forat was also a way to preserve this traditional social fabric and social relations. As Paco, a longtime activist (2009), explains: "The neighborhood was already lost, and what we wanted for it not to be lost another time. And we thought that, with a green space and with having life right there inside, we thought that it would stand this. But not if we had a hard plaza, because hard plazas do not stand people." Likewise, in Boston, the emphasis on community gardens stemmed from a desire to strengthen traditional community ties around a activity. Jose from DSNI (2009) explains:

“So the community gardens are more something to benefit the community. [...] A place for seniors to go and spend some time. So that is also some type of occupation for them. They didn't have much of a center or place for them to go. So give them something they like and at the same time they live longer because they are working and doing something instead of sitting.”

Here, the development of gardens supports the traditional activities of older residents.

The emphasis on urban agriculture in neighborhood revitalization projects is directly related to supporting and reviving the traditional practices of many neighborhood residents. This is particularly true in Boston and Barcelona. In the two cities, a large number of residents have emigrated from rural and/or poorer regions of the US and Spain and were used to growing their own food for their subsistence. For many, growing vegetables and fruit is a long-time family tradition in their region of origin and reflects their desire to grow certain culturally-valued types of food that they could not access otherwise. People value physically and symbolically the produce they grow as a memory of their childhood. Mickey, a 10-year old garden volunteer in Barcelona (2009), shares his intimate connection to farming: “I miss the Dominican Republic a lot – the plants there, the freedom there, my grandmother’s estate. She left me a big garden where they are a lot of corn plants growing, which is called camote in Dominican.” Pansy, the garden coordinator of the Leyland Street Garden in Dudley (2009), explains this deep connection to urban agriculture:

“There are quite a few of people you know not from Massachusetts, they are from different parts of the country so they decided they wanted some of their home vegetables. So they would get them a spot and plant them whatever they was brought up on. It's like me, I planted greens and collard greens that's cause I was raised on a farm. [...] [I started working in the community garden] because I'm a farm girl. I like that kind of work. We always had a garden when I was home.”

Community gardens are one of the few places where people have close access to their culture in the city. Consequently, for community organizations, supporting residents to farm is a way to help them save their roots and remain tied to their origins.

Residents have been so traumatized by the losses they suffered that they cringe on the new green spaces and do everything to protect them. In all cities, people are very attached to the spaces they have fought for. In Boston, a BNAN staff member (2009), describes the attitude of gardeners:

“People say: ‘You cannot touch my plot.’ [...]. It had taken them years and years and years to get that plot in the shape they wanted it. You know people get attached to their plants. It's like you know, it's their hard work, their own space. In a city like Boston, most residents are not lucky enough to have that piece of land. It becomes very personal and sometimes, actually it's hard for us to get across to gardeners that there may be somebody here after you.”

In Havana, this fear of loss is expressed in the fight of Salvador, the artist of the Callejón de Hamel, as he explains that Afro-Cuban culture is slowly becoming assimilated into the national white communist culture and that Afro-Cuban’ identity could become diluted. Salvador fought for the Afro-Cuban residents (2009): “In 1990, I decided to do this work which was inspired in the themes of the Afro-Cuban culture, which was not a religious piece, but rather a piece that would interpret the theme of culture, creating a temple with my piece, an artistic temple [...] which

would contribute to the salvation of this cultural identity.” His work supported Afrocubans who did not the freedom and the right to express their culture and identity.

In short, residents and their supporters have responded to years and decades of loss, grief, and fears over further destruction by engaging in environmental activities which give them a sense of rootedness and placeness, connects them to traditional activities and to their deeply rooted identity, and develops ties between residents. However, the long quest for environmental justice is also tied to increasing safety, nurturing, and comfort for residents.

3.3.2 From environmental violence to nurturing and safe havens

In Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, residents, local leaders, and community workers underline the positive role of environmental projects to create safer conditions for residents and eventually achieve environmental justice. Mike Kozu (2009) sums up the work of Project Right, an organization focused on violence prevention in Dudley: “As we are trying to build a healthy and safe community, environmental justice is a key component of that because, for a sustainable community, for a healthy community, you really do have to have a really clear strategy based on, vision based on environmental justice.” Penn Loh, the former Director of ACE in Dudley (2009), confirms the tight relation between addressing violence and achieving environmental justice:

“That is a huge, and that has been consistent with all of our young people since the beginning. That young people always define violence and safety issues as part of their environmental justice framework [...]. Kids have been shot in parks. There are a number of tragic stories where little kids getting shot by stray bullets.”

In other words, addressing violent and unsafe conditions in historically marginalized neighborhoods is part of achieving environmental justice.

In their accounts, activists recall the violence and conflicts that used to exist between groups in the neighborhoods, as well as the consumption and trade of drugs, which had contributed to an impression of conflict zone, unwelcoming space, and unsafe neighborhood in general. As a response to the violence and crime, a number of active residents have focused on reclaiming abandoned areas, which, in turn act as a buffer to criminal activity and other unwanted social behavior such as drug dealing. In Dudley, such reclamation of a violent space is illustrated by the physical occupation in the early 1990s of the Mary Hannon Park by the residents, who organized recreational activities, sports leagues, and cleanup on it for a whole summer to deter drug traffic and collectively act as a barrier to violence. As Tubal, a local leader (2009), explains:

“The proposal was to take out the drug addicts, and a series of campaigns got initiated, and there was a summer in which we had activities there every weekend, with the presence of the community. Our theory was that if we go and occupy the park, then undesirable people will abandon it.”

Crime and violence are fought against by transforming empty or neglected land where drug activity is bred into numerous neighborhood parks and playgrounds, where parents know their kids are close by.

Eradicating crime has also consisted in creating community gardens and bringing residents together around them. Charlotte Kahn (2009) explains the use of community gardens as counterpoints to violent relations: “I started Boston Urban Gardeners at the time of busing as an antidote to the violence. [...] It was a counter balance to what was happening. It's very rooted,

everybody can do it, you know it's really about growing instead of killing.” Crime statistics have also led residents to push for enclosed centers that develop sports activities which could otherwise take place in parks. A Department of Neighborhood Development staff member (2009) explains the trade offs:

“As far as open spaces that are free and clear and open, there are problems potentially with crime and attracting crime. So we have to do very, very extensive work with the community and really vetting out the process of whether or not that site is a particularly good site. So that is something we really have to, for me it's really difficult to advocate for any space that is just free and open all the time in a neighborhood where there is high crime.”

As a result, a combination of parks and playgrounds with supervised activities organized by after-school programs have been created in association with community centers such as the Croc Center.

Where violent crime is quasi inexistent, such as Cayo Hueso, leaders put much emphasis on helping kids using drugs, trafficking drugs, or engaged in petty crime develop positive mentalities and attitudes through sports and engagement in community revitalization efforts. Community centers are also created to respond to crime and lack of safety, as kids can be supervised and coached, such as the Quiero a mi Barrio gym in Cayo Hueso. They are not left alone hanging out on the streets and less at-risk of getting involved in criminal activity. Project supervisors even check and monitor their educational achievements and progress.

Several community activists and leaders in Dudley relate their initiatives to what can be called “fights against environmental violence.” Resisting dumping and transforming lots into parks, playgrounds, and community gardens is a way to confront abuse, trauma, insults, mistreatment, and environmental violence more generally. Tubal, an early activist in Dudley (2009), explains his resistance to environmental abuses:

“The environmental topic was always integrated with other issues. At a certain point I articulated a relation between violence and the conditions of people, the social conditions of people with the environment in which they were living, and the environment as something more than simply the physical thing, but also the environment of violence, and the fact that the trash was nothing else than a manifestation of this common violence with which people identified.”

(Re)-building amenities such as parks allowed residents to have hope that the neighborhood could be secure and that another image was possible, as Alexandria from the Food Project (2009), explains: “The young people who are walking by the farm are able to immediately on a deeply subconscious level begin to recognize that the community doesn't have to be what it has always been. It doesn't have to be a community that is violent, that is unhealthy.” This new image is more in harmony with nature and the environment.

Safety has recently been associated with improving the mental and psychological dimensions of health in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso. Residents and community leaders are actively engaged in providing kids with spaces that give them a sense of security and comfort, and respond to their emotional needs as at-risk children from vulnerable backgrounds. Children are provided with spaces that offer them psychological relief, warmth, sympathy, community, and a place to share their fears and find support. In Dudley, kids suffering from obesity are being recruited by the Body by Brandy and the cooking classes at the Haley House,

which are both soothing and comfortable spaces. The gym programs are based on a holistic vision of health, as expressed by a program manager (2010):

“We provide a family atmosphere, a safe place to work out and to be mentally and physically fit. Parents can chat with Brandy and Bobby about the outcomes of working out together. Family participation is promoted, which has also an effect on the community. Symbolically, that means that families are again a family, especially in marginalized community.”

Youth develop a positive body image, strengthen their self-esteem while addressing obesity and other problems impacting their psychological development.

Community activists in Cayo Hueso and Casce Antic also emphasize the need to provide support to the emotional needs of at-risk kids through sports activities. As Cristián Rendón in Cayo Hueso (2009) explains:

“We take kids away from bad things and from being in the streets. It is a way to educate kids who have a problem of conduct at school. We are working with them educating their mentality. The problem here is that many families have arguments at home. We are trying to work on their mentality in another way so that they are not so much in the streets. They leave school at 4.30 and come here to do sports at 5pm. Their quality of life starts to improve.”

In Barcelona, one of the volunteer coordinators of the AECCA sports association (2009) expresses similar goals:

“You see the kids enjoy. If they were not here in our neighborhood, at this age they would be on the street. Because we keep them quite tight. However, a lot of the kids who are with our kids, from what we can see, spend all their day in the street. [...] This is also to keep them together. They get out of school, go training.”

Kids are well surrounded and supervised.

Within the psychological benefits of environmental and health projects are also aspects of recovering from trauma. Many kids have suffered from trauma – in the form of separation between them and their parents who did not immigrate with them to Barcelona or Boston or parents who have left Cuba, or in the form of neglect within their own family. Several community organizers coordinating activities with kids in urban farms, community gardens, or community centers explain their effort to address traumatic life experiences and act as mentors for the kids, such as Alexandria King in The Food Project (2009): “The team leadership curriculum is really essential to being able to process trauma. And that a good deal of youth of color in Boston are suffering from trauma [...]. The key with being able to overcome your obstacles is having proper mentorship that will enable you to make the next step.” A staff member from the Boston School Yard initiative (2009) also emphasizes the need for healing and soothing: “We've bridged gaps. Some neighbors had resistant attitudes, did not want new ideas in, some have now crossed over and volunteer to water kids garden. So we have tried to heal neighborhoods, communities, kids to be more accepting and moving beyond wounds”. Here, working in the natural world of schoolyards is meant to have an effect on violent remediation and heal the scars of residents.

Those dimensions of mental health and safety are reflected in the creation of what can be called “safe havens.” Safe havens include some components of free spaces – small scale community settings removed from the direct control of dominant groups where powerless groups

are able to overturn hegemonic beliefs (Poletta 1999). However, they also involve aspects nurturing, care, and mental support towards groups benefiting from safe havens. In Dudley, Mike Kozu from Project Right (2009) explains the origins and advantages of safe havens: “You have a lot of places where there is not enough play or green space. Children are playing out in the streets. And when we looked at Grove Hall versus some of the other neighborhoods, maybe 5, 10, 15 years ago we really didn't have any large, multi-purpose facilities, no large community centers, no large Boys & Girls Club. So there wasn't really a lot of indoor places where youth, or community people could burn off their energy and have fun. So we had our whole campaign about expanding both indoor and outdoor play spaces, safe havens, where we can expand the positive opportunities for youth in the neighborhood.” Protection and re-aassuring of each other is a core aspect of safe havens, as described by Drew Forster (2009) when referring to the sport equipments in the Croc center:

“A pool like this [a recreational pool] encourages families swimming together, it promotes people who would not ordinarily swim get into the water, because it's zero depth entry [...]. It's heated water, it has these fun water features. It has a lazy river component to it. And so both young children who might be frightened to jump into three feet of cold water and who among us really likes that experience jumping into three feet of cold water.”

Here, families can have active and physical lifestyles in a protective, nurturing and safe environment.

In other words, these newly built places are refuges for the residents from the stresses and traumas they suffer. At the same time, these are places isolated from the turmoil of the city where life can develop and residents can thrive. Jose Barros (2009) describes the achievements of Dudley Common, the neighborhood plaza in Dudley, reporting the words of Board Member Paul Bothwell:

“I've got to share this because really I felt so good. As I came it was 6:30 and there were some kids playing, roller skating at night the mother was watching.’ He said for me it was really great to see them because they felt safe to go there and play on Dudley Street. At the end he said ‘that was the vision that we had. Remember when we said part of the vision was to see kids playing, sound of Jazz, food, music from different countries.’”

Similarly, the coordinator of the Savin Maywood Garden (2009) expresses her feelings of appeasement from spending time in the garden: “I like to come and look at the garden and sit. I come and relax and walk. I like the scenery it's so beautiful and so green.” In Barcelona, safe havens take the form of the new community centers, parks and playgrounds where kids can play safely away from traffic, and where marginalized groups become visible and re-appropriate the space as their own. Supporters of the Forat, such as Lawyer E. Moreno (2009), explain the symbolic role of the green spaces: “What is the use of the green space? It's not that it is only green [...] it is a space for walking by, relaxing, it makes the city free and open.” The Forat completely changes the use of the space by residents.

Spaces such as the Callejón de Hamel, the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, and the Quiero a mi Barrio gym in Cayo Hueso are safe havens. In the Callejón de Hamel, Afrocubans can express their form of art and dance without feeling that they are judged or discriminated against by the white society. Elias, a contributor to the Callejon (2009) explains:

“Many People were feeling identified with the Rumba. We based ourselves in the religion of people. It is a project for diffusion, for the socialization. We insert the culture of African origins in the place and create a place that they could touch. Also provide them with have an intangible heritage, a treasure, a resource.”

In that sense, a safe haven also has a spiritual and psychologically protective dimension. The new environmental elements brought to the Callejón invite this spirituality and poetry of the Afrocuban culture, as Salvador (2009) explains: “All the Orishas have a logical spiritual communication with nature. Chango is ray and energy, Yemaza is sea, Orisha has a relation with the earth.” Likewise, the Casa del Niño y de la Niña and the Quiero a mi Barrio gym are place where nurturing and soothing are two important components of the projects, as children have quiet and peaceful space to play, do sports, study, mingle, and receive mentoring and support from Rosa, Pablo, and Jaime. Jaime, the Quiero a mi Barrio coordinator (2009), explains the strong sense of comfort and ownership that the youth feels towards the new renovated space: “Kids have a lot of identification with the project. They call it ‘The Hole’.” The gym is a place for them to express themselves and their needs while being protected from outside eyes and receiving mentoring from adults.

Beyond the physical spaces that safe havens are, they are also mental and abstract spaces for people to express their concern, receive support, or just be together as a group. At the Haley House, Kathy Mac Kenna (2009) explains clients’ feelings about the new bakery and café: “The response from people who walk through the door is just that people feel so happy that this is there. A place that belongs to them, it’s right in their neighborhood.” Similarly, Bing Broderick (2009) explains his own vision about the café: It was about

“giving people a place, a sanctuary, a sanctuary sounds awful I don’t like that, like you said there might be ten places that people can go if they lived in Central Square. You know, and giving people a place to go. I think that is related to environmental justice in a very weird way [...]. Why shouldn’t everybody have a place to go where there would be a sense of possibility and community [...] There aren’t plenty of places that are nourishing. Nourishment like on a lot of different levels I think is what I connect with the environmental just.”

Safe havens thus reflect residents’ demand for space rather than demand in space. Laia, a youth organizer in the Casc Antic (2009), explains this need for a social space: “a social space got created in a natural manner, a space of encounter. One Christmas, people planted a tree, and around the tree, people would bring the chairs down, people would sit down to talk, people from the neighborhood started to become aware that a “place to be” was lacking – a plaza, a park, a space for relations.” In a few weeks, the space had transformed and a park got created.

In sum, activists in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic and Dudley have used their environmental and health endeavors as a way to rebuild a broken community, fight against loss, grief and environmental violence, and eventually create safe havens. Enclosed community spaces dedicated to physical activity and cafés selling healthy food, enhance the neighborhood environmental value more than beautiful maintained, but empty and unused parks and playgrounds. Constructing a new sports and recreational complex in place of a vacant lot, which brings people together in neighborhoods where outdoor playgrounds are structurally or contextually unsafe and where residents have no place to socialize, can be envisioned as poor residents’ idea of getting a green space. Their work has been a way to re-make a traumatized neighborhood and create a renewed sense of rootedness for residents, strengthen their individual

and collective identity and, in return, enhance their positive connection and attachment to the place.

3.4 Re(creating) an urban village and celebrating the community

While repairing a broken community has been essential, activists also frame a more dynamic and positive place-remaking goal: Environmental and health projects allow residents to create a vibrant urban village and celebrate the community.

3.4.1 The construction of an urban village

Residents and their supporters have put a strong accent on (re)creating the life and atmosphere of an urban village, and this through the environmental and health initiatives they pushed for. The creation of an urban village stems from the nostalgia for the cozy, small, and familiar place that Dudley and Casc Antic, in particular, used to be before the degradation and urban changes the neighborhoods went through. In the words of Greg Watson, the former DSNI Executive Director (2009),

“Roxbury was a place, it was a retreat from the city. It was rural back in those days. We said let's bring back some of the native, [...], the cultural, aspects of a multi-cultural neighborhood that could be used to create the sense of place that would have low environmental impact but could also contribute to economic development, we would throw in the urban agriculture.”

An urban village is a self-sustained entity with a vibrant life and a range of work and leisure activities for residents to engage into.

Fighting for a village represents, in the mind of community activists, a way to unite a wide range of residents together to help solidify a place which represents a multi-cultural and dynamic community, with food growing in different parts of the neighborhood. It helps create a unique place for residents, which they can cherish. An urban village also includes community landmarks for people to connect to, such as Dudley Commons in Dudley, the Pou de la Figuera or the Allada Vermell spaces in Barcelona, the Callejón de Hamel or Parque Trillo and Beisbolito green spaces in Havana. Village has a stronger and thicker connotation than neighborhood. An urban village is strongly connected to the goal of urban sustainability, multiuse of space, and compactness, as illustrated by Jeanne Dubois from Dorchester Bay Development Corporation (2009):

“You can create an urban village where you have organic farming and green spaces and walk able neighborhoods and walking to your train, and getting on the train to go to work or school and you don't have to use a car and you see people you know down in the little business district. So it's all, it's all livability. It's sustainable communities.”

In Havana, the Green Map project has equally contributed to building more self-sustainable communities as it is meant to “mobilize local resources and efforts in the process of constructing sustainable communities “ (Cuba green map document). Building the green map is a space of community construction, experimentation, and for the creation of a self-sustained village.

Creating an urban village means revitalizing local traditions such as communal work and rebuilding the existing local identity. In all three neighborhoods, people gather bring around an

activity – neighborhood clean up, community garden, cooking, etc – and socializing. In Barcelona, Laia (2009) explains the community work which developed around the Forat: “Saturdays was the community day, say of planting new plants, so the people (some neighbors) would bring some plants, others would be in charge of the planting itself, the other ones of the maintenance of the garden. [...] For me, this seemed incredible.” Consequently, the volunteer activities are meant to benefit the community, which is why harvests of community gardens in Barcelona are used for events organized by volunteers for the residents. In fact, some of the core principles of life in an urban village are based on sharing – the food, the space, the greenery – and on showing solidarity with the neighbors. The idea is to extend the social relations in a family to the street and extend the house environment to the park, as illustrated by some of the streets signs in the balconies of the Casc Antic “Els carrers como a casa nostra” (In the street as in our house). A similar vision is shared by Pablo, one of the coordinators of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña (2009), about the Callejón de Hamel in Havana: “The Callejon is more of a village atmosphere, something from the street, there are fewer taboos.” In his words, a village is a welcoming and a non “rigid” and “impersonal” space which values the culture of its residents.

The vision of building an urban village manifests itself most visibly through residents organizing activities together and bringing energy to the neighborhood. Behind such expressions of community life lies the idea of (re)-appropriating the physical and public spaces in the neighborhood and ensuring that new spaces are being used by different groups for the benefits of the community. In Barcelona, for some residents, the construction of community gardens and playgrounds for kids in the Forat was almost like a pretext for neighbors to gather in the street and work together while discussing concerns or preparing parties. Monika, a squatter in the Forat (2009), expresses her own rationale for participating in the Forat activities:

“It was the desire to be in a place where there was life, community, and neighborhood life, because it was one of the things that Barcelona had a lot, but has much less now. But it has neighborhoods where people know each other and do things in the streets, and the kids play in the street. Like a life that is seen like old. But many of us are not satisfied with the life that supposedly we should live.”

Residents are eager to reconstitute a more intimate relation with their neighbors and they use the environmental activities as a segue. In a large city where relations can be depersonalized, community environmental work helps residents re-initiate and re-build close human rapport.

Similarly, spaces such as the Casa del Niño y de la Niña in Cuba offer opportunities for the organization of community activities, as Iñaki from Save the Children (2009) explains: “It is important, in the first place, to have social spaces available where community activities can develop.” Community building and bringing people together have often taken the form of peñas – events organized around cultural and art events. These gatherings were particularly important during the remodeling of solares buildings. The wife of a recently deceased blind community artist (2009) who organized such events explains his vision for the peñas:

“People meet and do parties. People sing, dance, and play the Rumba. It is as if it is a family meeting. People share. He was uniting people and was taking many people from the solares. The goal was for the neighbors to communicate more and relate themselves more with each other. And to make sure that people who have such difficult family relations and live in such a difficult environment are more solidary of each other.”

As a result, mini urban villages got created in the solares, where residents worked together around building construction and cultural celebrations. Today, they still collaborate for the maintenance of the new space, plant plants in the patios, and organize parties for the residents.

Developing close and intimate relationships between residents is also the goal of some sports associations and community centers. In the Casc Antic, the coordinators of AECCA (2009) emphasize the importance of families' engagement in the sports leagues and creating tighter relations with them: "There is a tendency that we want to try to eliminate – that families only stand up for the project when they register their kids, because we are also interested in them feeling integrated – not as a social service that we'd do, but rather that they form part of it. AECCA is not me or Montse, it is all of us." This is also the case of the Village Center in the new Croc community center, as explained by Drew Forster (2009):

"Village Center is sort of this two story atrium place that welcomes people in the building, dining facility, a commercial kitchen, the teaching kitchen, some community meeting space back here, the cafe. [...] The fact that the matter is you can't get together for coffee in the neighborhood. [...] There are very few places to sort of just sit and have a nice cup of coffee or a healthy snack or whatever and just sit and chat with somebody. And so there is that and there is also after your workout you might want to make use of that."

The Croc center thus allows residents to build closer while informal relations.

3.4.2 The celebration of the community

Celebrating the community as a diverse, mixed, and multi-cultural place forms part of the vision of activists engaged in environmental improvements in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana.

The production of new vibrant and lively spaces is meant to change the character and atmosphere of the neighborhood for the benefits of the residents. Travis Watson (DSNI) (2009) explains the importance of the new Croc Center for changing the daily rhythm of the neighborhood:

"So it's almost like a destination, you are going to the Croc Center for the day, you are hanging out, maybe you are playing tennis at the tennis courts or maybe over at the Mary Hammond baseball field there is an organized softball game. [...]. So it will have a complete urban village so to speak that DSNI has worked to achieve."

Similar visions are also conveyed by an Ex-Director from the GDIC in Havana (2009), as she describes the local parks that the TTIB and local residents have helped maintained:

"We have always worked [...] in actions for the improvement of the park and its maintenance. The park is nice how it is, but it needs to be maintained because it is a social and socio-cultural center for the community. It is being used from morning to night, with the kids, the elderly, with all the people. There are days where it is used as a market, concerts get organized there."

Consequently, today, walking through the streets of Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso truly conveys an impression of familiarity, liveliness, warmth, and excitement. People talk to each other on the streets, or from the street to a house balcony; they are seated in parks and picnic; they play soccer together, the music is blasting and people dance on the streets; passer-bys can hear the laughs of kids playing on the playground equipment.

The celebratory activities organized as part of the new environmental projects promote a multicultural atmosphere. In the Casc Antic, the fiestas that residents prepare for community gardens harvests are planned according to the cultural traditions of the residents (i.e., couscous), and participants bring small contributions to the meal (i.e., Moroccan families prepare mint tea). Bakers bring bread and pastries and the coordinators of the Network for Responsible Consumption bring other ingredients. These social and celebratory events are born out of the mobilizations in the Forat, as a natural outgrowth of people meeting and discussing issues. In Barcelona, Paco, an early Forat activist (2009), explains the development of the activities:

“We were here for two years planting, doing assemblies, preparing parties, doing concerts [...] We did many things here, soccer tournaments, we could do anything, or parties for the kids. [...] There were many people here – Dominicans, Algerians – there were, god, people from every origin participate and doing things. [...] And also traditional paellas here, we’ve done many of them.”

During the Forat fights, ties became stronger between residents of different origins, and since then, festive events have been organized to value and bring greater visibility to this diversity.

Likewise, in Dudley, local organizations such as DSNI, Project Right, ACE, or The Haley House organize multicultural festivals on the streets or in parks to recognize the talents, history, and diversity of the neighborhoods. Bing from the Haley House (2009) shares the work he has been doing around such events:

“Mel King read from his poetry book called streets. And it was about the streets where he grew up and his neighborhood and what made it a meaningful place for him. And it was a magical night because everybody in the room got up and talked about the street they grew up on and what made it special. What qualities they valued in their neighborhood.”

Much activity is also organized around the community gardens as explained by Alma, the Monadnock Street garden coordinator (2009):

“BNAN sponsors a series of concerts in the community gardens every year. And one year we hosted a concert in the garden. Which was just like a really nice thing. It was the first or second year that the garden was newly renovated. And uh, we had cookouts [...] From time to time there is sort of these multi-cultural blocks or street parties you know and people bring their own ethnic foods.”

The atmosphere turns then festive and streets become animated with music and celebrations.

In Cayo Hueso, the Callejón de Hamel celebrates the Afrocuban culture of the neighborhood while bringing a very festive and carnival-type atmosphere to Cayo Hueso. Residents recognize themselves in the Callejón and feel a strong sense of ownership and pride towards it, as explained by Elias, the promoter of the Callejón (2009): “It is a landmark and gives legitimacy to the neighborhood. It helps legitimatizing the culture of the neighborhood. [...] It is a pride for the identity of people from African origins. [...] It also inserts the African cultures within the society and help the socialization of culture” Such a goal manifests most clearly through the rumba music and dance events organized on Sunday when the whole neighborhood is invited to participate and visitors from different parts of the city and the world come together.

Activists often fight to preserve a mixity and a diversity which they experienced in their place of origin, but which they consider extinct in their new neighborhood. For instance,

Hubertus, a social architect in the Casc Antic (2009), shares his own experience from back in Germany:

“I have a certain sensibility towards the patrimony, which comes a little bit, not only through the physical built patrimony, but also through the infrastructure that still exists here with the artisans. It fascinates me because in Germany this has ceased to exist for many years. [...] I was already born in the Germany of supermarkets.”

Activists are thus motivated by creating a form of social sustainability and conserving the social infrastructure of the place. Projects such as gardens, farms, community centers, and other public spaces are opportunities to create a festive atmosphere in the neighborhood. Kathy from the Haley House (2009) explains her own vision for making Dudley a more exciting place and a tighter community:

“We help promote Dudley as a vibrant community and not a scary place. That is what happens when you have a venue. Healthy food is a way to see what we can do to add to the health of the community. But people come around this food and other things begin to happen: art on the wall, cooking classes, the only public wireless in neighborhood, people come to do their work. [...] The art celebrates the neighborhood, green food.”

The dream of activists is that places such as the Haley House or the Croc Center would develop spaces where the community could grow together and flourish.

Eventually, the environmental endeavors around which activists coalesce are meant to strengthen the ties between residents, ensure their continuity in the neighborhood, increase proximity between people, and re-build a collective neighborhood identity. Alexandria from the Food Project (2009) expresses this goal:

“It is about the communities’ voice being able to and the communities’ energy being able to create what the community wants: The idea of a community coming together and saying what the community wants. The Food Project is a really interesting organization because it's become of the community. [...] It's a reciprocal relationship of understanding the balance between humanity and the nature around us that helps us to revitalize and empower ourselves. Because we understand our interconnection. And when you understand that, then you are able to understand the interconnection between you and the person living next door to you.”

In that sense, residents who participate in environmental projects are meant to value each other as necessary pieces of a broader rich system – the neighborhood. Organizations unite residents around a neighborhood-oriented agenda. The fabric of the place become enriched, and eventually the emotional connections of residents to each other and to their neighborhood become strengthened.

3.4.3 Learning, sharing of experiences, and social coexistence

Last, environmental and health initiatives serve as a means to enhance learning from one another, strengthen the sharing of knowledge and experience, improve listening skills, and eventually coexist in a more harmonious way.

Local environmental revitalization projects fulfill the goal of mutual learning and teaching. Residents engage in community projects as a way to share their knowledge and learn

from others. Paco, a garden coordinator in the Casc Antic (2009), emphasizes these mutual benefits:

“I participate through my experiences, my knowledge, which I ensure that others can benefit from [...]. The philosophy is a little bit this one: one shows me how to plant in the garden, another one shows me how to take care of the crops [...]. We want to make sure that the garden can happen with these principles in mind. That it becomes a tool for the neighborhood.”

Likewise, community gardens are a means to preserve intergenerational exchanges and teaching of older residents to the local youth, in all three neighborhoods. In Dudley, Trish Settles from DSNI (2009) explains the power of these intergenerational ties: “We've got a school which comes. They want to do some work in the gardens. And there is kind of the cross generational piece that happens which is really cool. [...] Cross generational stuff. There needs to be this connection.” Building relations between generations also addresses assimilation issues, as Alexandria from the Food Project (2009) describes:

“People who are coming over here and their decedents come over and there is this disconnect because you have ‘the what is it’? Becoming assimilated into American culture. So you kind of loose your roots. A lot of the elders in the community, things like farming are second nature and key. But now young people can kind of see the connection to that and respect it and get involved.”

Through the farm, local youth remain connected to their origins, grow a stronger individual, and collective identity to their place, develop stronger ties to the neighborhood, and might eventually engage regularly in environmental work.

Environmental projects also serve as a mechanism to collaboratively problem solve, learn how to build consensus between points of views, and eventually achieve solid environmental improvements together. As Maria, a volunteer in the Casc Antic community garden (2009), explains, people learn to better accept each other:

“Manolo has a certain way of thinking because he was born in the countryside where things have been done in a different way. Another person comes from another environment and was taught that things are better if they are done that way. Everyone has his opinion, and this is the beautiful part of it, it's the point of it. Not coming and saying ‘this is how it is done, or that this is way to do it.’”

Activities teach people how to work together in solidarity and accommodate each other's opinions. All the residents thus resemble a mini society represented in an environmental project. In Cuba, the permaculture gardens and the organopónico also require improved co-existence between the people working urban agriculture and the residents. The projects help infuse greater respect and sharing, as Gladys (2009) points out: “What we do with the garden gets transmitted. People pass by and say: it is so good what you are doing, you keep the place really nice and clean. We want people to be receptive.” The project contributes to people learning.” There is a strong knowledge exchange through permaculture and people built a stronger sense of responsibility.

People learn to share different responsibilities and tasks, and work to ensure that projects do not belong to one community group. A staff member from the Boston Natural Areas Network (2009) explains this intent to work out a balance between participants:

“Most of the gardens tend to be a place where people build bridges. If people go to a neighborhood meeting over some issue a lot of times you will see the different

factions. Whether they disagree, you know politely or not, you know you will see the difference of opinion. Those agendas seem to be left outside the garden gate. When people come in to garden, the one agenda is gardening. So even people who don't speak the same language, I've seen communicate absolutely clearly over squash or tomato. You know, it's a profound community building process, absolutely profound."

In many ways, working together helps them integrate in the neighborhood and bridge gaps between each other.

Working with residents on improving practices and maintaining cleaner community spaces has often multiple benefits in terms of coexistence and harmony between neighbors. In the Casc Antic, staff members from organizations such as the environmental NGO GENAB involved in waste management explain how their work is meant to improve inter-personal relations in the Casc Antic:

"They were still problems of public health because the streets were dirty, and the kids could not play in the street because it was super dirty. It also generates coexistence problems and tensions between neighbors because 'this one is throwing trash' 'that one always throws trash', etc. It was like playing with the balance of coexistence and with the space, even though the issue was, let's say, the waste" (Albert 2009).

In that sense, social aspects are key to address environmentally unsustainable behavior. The projects build the responsibility of the neighbors for the neighborhood and their space. In Cuba, Rosa from the Casa del Niño y de la Niña and other residents working on park and street waste management also emphasize the importance of values such as respect and responsibility being shared and transmitted to the residents. Through this type of work, people become more environmentally and socially aware and more resilient to deal with forthcoming issues.

Improving tolerance, enhancing openness about other ethnic groups, and creating dialogue has been a core goal of leaders working on environmental projects. In all three neighborhoods, the rehabilitation of sports grounds and the development of new facilities combined with the organization of leagues are a means to address conflicts. Activities bring kids together who would not otherwise be in contact. Such principles are reflected in AECCA's mission in Barcelona: "Through the practice of basketball, the needs of the different present cultures have been united, while creating a real atmosphere of coexistence and especially transmitting diversity as a value." Similar visions about social cohesion are shared by activists in the Forat, such as Paco (2009):

"We saw that we were facilitating coexistence in the neighborhood, and that there were not that many fights any more. Here there are various communities – Moroccans, Dominicans – so, of course, everyone wants his place. However the little kids do not have such idea 'me with the Dominicans, me with the Magrebis.' No, they would participate with everyone, they did not care, they just played. [...] The kids, the youth, the soccer matches, etc. People were respecting each other. People were getting to know its other [...]."

In Cuba, the Callejón de Hamel helps contacts with other groups as Elias (2009) emphasizes: "Foreigners go to the houses. They build friendships in the houses. It is a space of socialization of cultural identities. They are also people from other neighborhoods, provinces who come." In the Callejón, participants become engaged in different activities and increase their mechanisms of socialization and their sense of closeness.

Likewise, in Dudley, the cooking classes for at-risk kids at the Haley House combine the provision of healthy and affordable food options with lessons about cultural openness, mutual help, decreasing preconceived opinions about others, breaking down cultural stereotypes and conflicts, and working in solidarity with a combination of ingredients from different unknown cultures. The Haley House uses healthy food as segue to breach racial, cultural, and economic divide and to open kids' minds. The Boston Schoolyard Initiative also works to eliminate resentment between kids from other neighborhoods who come to Dudley, and vice versa, as a staff member (2009) explains:

"The white flight and disinvestment made us want to equalize issues around integration. There was a lot of resentment against kids coming to neighborhood. Still exists. In the Emerson, it is monochromatic, there bringing in "not my people" is a big deal. We've bridged gaps. Some neighbors had resistant attitudes, did not want new ideas in, some have now crossed over and volunteer to water kids' garden."

Thanks to the schoolyard projects, negative preconceived opinions have weakened and the community becomes more robust and resilient to conflict and threats of division.

Despite efforts to bring different residents together, divergences remain at times among residents. For instance, in Dudley conflicts arise around the management of the community gardens, with ethnic groups attempting to work their differences out. In other cases, such as in the Leyland Street Garden, differences do not get worked out and people just created a new garden that suited their vision and own social dynamics better. Environmental work gets furthered in the neighborhood through conflict because people claim their own space where they feel safe and at ease. As Jess from The Food Project (2009) explains, "the women of the main garden seceded because they did not feel comfortable with the attitudes and behaviors of the men, especially in terms of the language, or drinking in the garden. It was awkward and difficult for the women so they created their own garden." This garden is almost as large as the first one, and is only a few yards away. Separate projects with similar goals and content exist in the neighborhood. In the Casc Antic, different sports leagues have organized in the neighborhood – with different ethnic and cultural composition.

In sum, activists have used environmental revitalization projects as ways to create a closely-knit village, celebrate the diversity and history of the community, while also enhancing mutual learning, social coexistence, and resolution of ethnic conflicts or tensions between residents. Based on their attachment to their neighborhood, their sense of community, and their feelings of responsibility, they have worked to strengthen a sense of closeness and self-reliance for the residents, cohesiveness and resilience, and eventually enhance their individual and collective identity.

3.5 Discussion

In Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, residents have a deep connection to their place through the connections they built over time in it and through the history and traditions that it encompasses. In addition, their experience of the neighborhood made them realize the negative impacts of neighborhood abandonment, decay, and degradation on environmental quality as well as on the local identity. This connection and realization, filtered by a sense of responsibility, a desire for personal growth and learning, and a commitment to the urban environment, have led

them to become involved in holistic environmental revitalization projects. Here, environmental justice is intertwined with community development and it is important that they are not separated. EJ is part of a broader puzzle. Activists have taken action in a wide variety of complementary domains – moving from clean up to safe farming, green spaces to learning, or physical activity to education – which feed on each other and reflect a natural evolution and a continuum in the mind of activists. These are the tangible and concrete physical aspects of long-term urban environmental justice.

In turn, these endeavors and the narratives activists have built around their neighborhood and their experience of it are meant to rebuild a broken community, fight against grief, loss and violence, create safe havens and refuges, and build an urban village with all its diversity and its aspects of self-sustainability. Such vision reflects protection, healing, resilience, and psychological health components of urban environmental justice work. This is particularly important because of the trauma experienced by marginalized residents. In other words, the work of active residents, community leaders, and neighborhood workers in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana reveal that urban environmental justice is truly embodied in the holistic revitalization of places where people play, learn, live and work all together. Activists' commitment to the neighborhood broadens traditional understandings of health to include right to physical activity, healthy food, but also to recreational spaces and to places where people feel secure. Their struggles reveal that both physical and psychological dimensions of environmental health must be taken into consideration to achieve environmental justice. Activists advance broader social agendas, which represent struggles for space rather than just struggles in space. Ultimately, this vision for place remaking and identity strengthening eventually feeds back into stronger attachment and community engagement. Place-remaking is thus a dynamic and dialectic relation and process with a positive feedback loop.

In fact, neighborhoods are imbued with specific negative images that people construct of themselves, but also with nostalgia and hopes. As marginalized neighborhoods attempt to revitalize community spaces, build new parks and playground, and develop urban farms and community gardens, they create safe havens, strengthen community bonds and identity, and re-make a place for marginalized residents. Environmental projects serve as a way to nurture the community, address loss, fear of erasure, grief, as well as create a sense of rootedness. Residents are concerned that the neighborhood is losing its identity and that the social fabric is being dismantled. They thus use environmental projects as a tool for place re-making and for creating an urban village, which is embodied by a tight and traditional social fabric, traditional farming and recreational practices for migrants and immigrants, as well opportunities for socializing, soothing, and protection. Projects are also meant to address internal conflicts and divisions within cultural and ethnic groups, and rally residents who were not previously engaged in neighborhood action or did not show interest in local participation. Place-making is thus the participation in both in the means of production of a locale and in the production of meaning (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003).

Activists' endeavors bring an ecosystem health perspective to environmental justice. Ecosystem health moves from examining the relatively narrow effects of social and physical environmental factors on health to seeing people as participants within their dynamic social and physical ecosystem. Here, comprehensive community initiatives, such as those that would qualify as embodiments of an ecosystem approach, promote positive change in individual,

family, and community circumstances largely by improving physical, economic, and social conditions (Spiegel et al., 2001; Yassi et al., 1999). Such a view takes a whole system perspective at the intersection of meeting basic needs such as food, energy, and shelter, while doing it in an environmental respectful way. Communities become more resilient and robust, and they integrate the concept of wellness into the equation of environmental revitalization.

The initiatives of residents and their supporters also provide new measures for assessing urban environmental quality, environmental health, and notions of safety and security in a neighborhood that they used to consider as a war zone and a destroyed place. Through their projects, leaders and organizations develop and strengthen a shared identity, with a strong cathartic soothing effect away from the pressures of the city relations, while bolstering the residents' ability to deal with negative relations. In that sense, the notion of environmental justice and urban sustainability in marginalized neighborhoods brings together environmental quality with a social dimension that is not reduced to social equity, poverty alleviation, and job creation. Social aspects of urban sustainability include a strong reference to community rebuilding, to ideas of cohesiveness, networking, wholeness, and nurturing.

In other words, community fights are oriented towards the inside of the neighborhood and re-making a *Gemeinschaft* where residents are bound by cultural ties and values, collaborate in harmony, and show altruism. Consequently, place attachment and sense of community are not only motivators for local action (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Cohrun, 1994; Davidson & Cotter, 1993), but environmental actions, in turn, serve as means to achieve goals related to strengthening the place and helping the neighborhood flourish from within. The struggles of residents reveal the tension between creating a place as a material reality, but also using place as a locus of sentiment and a vision for the future (Corcoran, 2002). Residents and their supporters do not have a weak sense of local identity, do not view the possibility of moving out positively, and do not feel disengaged from their neighborhood. The meaning of their mobilization is associated with anchoring themselves in memories, but also healing, as reflected by the words of Leonie Sandercock: Among others, the building of cities is about "organizing hoping, negotiating fears, mediating collective memories of identity and belonging [...] The past lives in us and gives us a sense of continuity, anchoring us even when we move (Sandercock, 2003), p.8.

As residents in the Casc Antic, Cayo Hueso, and Dudley became aware of the degradation, losses, and possible erasure of their neighborhood, and thus decided to take action to revitalize it in a holistic manner, they did not operate in isolation. Their neighborhood rebuilding was not only meant to remaking a place from within – a *Gemeinschaft* – but also to confront broader economic and social processes in which the neighborhood was embedded. Such urban processes and developments can not be separated from neighborhood claims and engagement. The analysis of the broader political agendas framed and defended by local activists is the point of the next chapter, in which I analyze the claims of residents, leaders, and neighborhood workers for community power, land control, and deepening democracy.

4 The Construction of Broader Political Agendas: Community Power, Land Control, and Deepening Democracy

The fights of urban residents for environmental and health improvements in marginalized communities are rooted in people's attachment to their neighborhood and reflect their vision for place-(re) making and protection of oneself and of one's community. However, their mobilization is also situated within a broader context of political and socio-economic changes that occur in cities and impact neighborhood stability, dynamics, and development. The integration of cities in the global economy has transformed them into nodes within a global network of financial services and corporate headquarters that attempt to efficiently organize the internationalization of production, finance and information, and attract new residents (Friedmann, 1986; Sassen, 1991; Sassen, 1999). Eventually, because capitalist investments move from place to place in long cycles of growth, devalorization, destruction, reinvestment, and mobilization, development ends up being spatially uneven throughout the city (Harvey, 1981; Smith, 1982). In parallel, the transformation of the urban economy towards a more decentralized, global, and technology-, finance-, and service-focused restructuring has been accompanied by rising socio-economic inequality (O'Connor, 2001).

In this chapter, I focus on the extent to which the environmental struggles of marginalized communities represent a desire to achieve environmental gains as opposed to serving as a means to advance broader political agendas in the city. In fact, the interviews I conducted with residents, local leaders, workers, as well as organizations outside the neighborhood as well as my observations and participant observation work helped me place the struggles of activists within a broader framework of urban processes and political engagement. Through grounded theory, process tracing, and historic and analytical narratives, I present how activists interpreted their work in the broader urban context. I analyze how they believe that their environmental and health work contributed to determined political outcomes such as combating marginalization, ensuring land and border control, and strengthening democratic practices, among others – in each neighborhood, – and thus encourage continued community engagement.

In other words, I show that activists use their environmental revitalization projects as a way to advance broad and new political agendas in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana. They fight stigmas and images about the neighborhood, attempt to control the land and its resources, create new borders with the dominant society and dominant groups, and ask for a new form of direct participation and spontaneous management of their territory. Their action also reflects a goal towards empowerment and leadership building in the community and towards the deepening of existing local democratic practices and structures. Figure 11 below summarizes this argument, which I will further develop in the following sections.

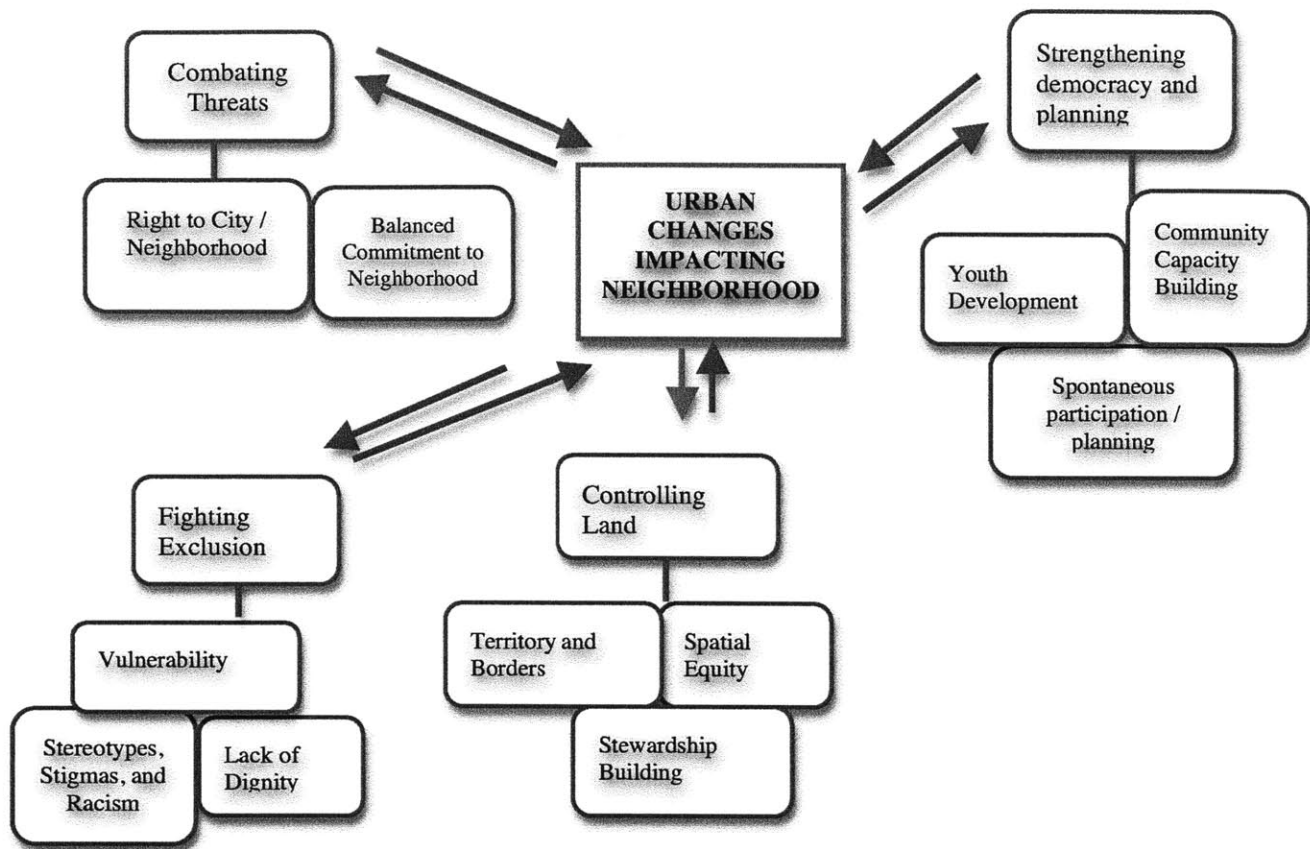


Figure 11: Broader Political Agendas in Environmental Revitalization Projects

As a response to broader urban processes and changes, urban residents have been shown to resist the disruptions and degradations of their neighborhoods and the violence of capitalist accumulation (Harvey, 1981; Smith, 1982), even if they are often challenged by larger flows and forces of development that outmaneuver them (Castells, 1983; Sassen, 1991). In addition, local groups articulate demands around a variety of other dimensions such as gender, race, and ethnicity, as core identities that rally people together (Agyeman et al., 2003; Diaz, 2005; Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Eckstein & Wickham-Crowley, 2003; Gottlieb, 2005; Harvey, 1996; Pellow & Brulle, 2005; Schlosberg, 2007; Zald & McCarthy, 1987). More recently, urban movements have seemed to coalesce around broader claims. Activists assert progressive values to build a revitalized, cosmopolitan, just, and democratic city (Fainstein, 1999, 2006). Movements also arise in regards to the Right to the City, which is animated by economic and environmental justice while, at the same time, fighting against real estate speculation, the privatization of community space, and gentrification, together with demands for greater democracy and human rights (Connolly & Steil, 2009; Marcuse, 2009a; Mitchell, 2003).

In Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, the engagement of community activists in environmental revitalization projects often reflects a long trajectory of political involvement and reflects broader political goals. For instance, Maria from the Neighbors Association of the Casc

Antic (2009) emphasizes her long-time historic commitment to fighting against injustices and excesses in Barcelona:

“We came from other involvements in other neighborhoods. There are a series of problems that aggravate the situation. We followed a policy of contestation and criticism against injustice, mobbing, expansionistic urbanism, uncontrolled tourism, norms of usage, etc. [...] [The neighborhood] can not be the garbage dump of the city. We must have a normal quality of life.”

There is thus no separation between environmental goals and political goals. In other words, activists connect several local issues together into a broader political project. Several organizations such as Architects without Borders also do express a strong need to cooperate and support local social movements or neighbors mobilization in the city, and have thus naturally become involved in local fights. For such organizations, supporting residents in the Casc Antic was a natural process reflecting many years of community involvement, political engagement in radical movements and territorial struggles, and collective processes of getting to know a neighborhood and its social issues.

Furthermore, people feel the thrill and adrenaline of being part of local political actions and of a movement encompassing a wide number and variety of people. The stories of residents' decision and process to become involved in environmental revitalization struggles reveal that their life has become to be their community work and that some of them can not live outside the idea of conflict and fighting for others. The style and words they use to describe their engagement reveal that they feel part of a social and political trajectory, as Emanuela, an Italian supporter of the Forat struggles (2009), explains: “For me it was part of my trajectory – to involve myself. I also liked the idea of doing a garden. I was living a trajectory.” People take pride in telling lengthy stories of their fights and their victories despite the injuries they received, as the words from Paco del Cuerpo (2009) suggest:

“They detained me for two nights, almost one day and a half going through all the centers, like a piece of a museum. Yes, they fucked up my neck [...] Here they were more one hundred policemen here between the secrete police and the other. There were not a few. There was a helicopter above, you should have seen it.”

Activists seem in a situation of self-representation and *mise-en scène* of themselves and their engagement.

The impression of being part of a political trajectory is also shared to some extent by activists in Boston, such as Alexandria in the Food Project (2009): “Well I like to think this neighborhood chose me. And so I feel like the movement that is happening right now is that we have to start getting our hands dirty and getting them in the ground and being able to build what we want to see.” In Cuba, people such as Salvador from the Callejón de Hamel (2009) consider themselves at the avant-garde of political changes in Cuba: “I feel that I have a great responsibility, because I took this on in 1990, when it was still a taboo to be able to express oneself in such a way,” which was before the IVth Congress of the Community Party which recognized the errors committed by the regime.” Leaders such as Rosa from the Casa del Niña y de la Niña or Joel Díaz, the Director of the TTIB, have also both long political trajectories of fighting for the Revolution, become active in political organizations, helping implement social programs throughout the country, and working with residents to combat marginalization and stigmas against neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso.

In sum, the engagement of activists in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic towards in environmental and health projects is grounded in concrete political motivations and often long term political activism, which I will analyze in depth in the next sections.

4.1 Combating outside threats while enhancing commitment to the neighborhood

4.1.1 Resisting urban processes and defending a Right to the City and Neighborhood

Environmental revitalization projects serve as a means to defend the local territory against outside threats while, at the same time, enhancing the commitment to the neighborhood from both inside residents and outside supporters. In the past three decades, Barcelona, Boston, and Havana have in fact witnessed a series of urban changes against which residents in the Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso are rallying. The opposition to urban developments is particularly virulent in Barcelona and Boston, but less so in Havana because of the less profound and drastic urban changes experienced by residents and the lack of decisions from city officials to sponsor far-researching and showcase urban projects.

In Barcelona, activists involved in environmental revitalization projects express their profound rejection of urban policies and vehemently refuse the transformation of their neighborhood into a “thematic park,” as they call it. People contest city-wide processes, and even global development processes, and they do this at the local neighborhood scale. According to numerous residents engaged in the Casc Antic fights, Barcelona is an entity that must be built slowly, by discussing every project, reaching an agreement around every intervention, and letting the city itself evolve naturally through the making of its neighborhoods by the residents themselves. Activists thus resist a type of urbanism that ignores the daily problems of residents, such as access to affordable and healthy housing, social equity, or environmental concerns. For them, Barcelona is not a place to live anymore, but rather a place to visit, work, or consume. Virginia, an artist from the *Compañía Moki Moki* (2009) underlines her resistance against these broader urban changes:

“I wanted to defend ordinary people. A lot of plans by the Municipality exist for the economic income of Barcelona, without thinking of the residents. It’s only a question of parking and hotels. Plans get implemented without consultation. They think it’s easy to cheat. They take people from the Forat out. We went to a demonstration because we don’t like the commodity of accepting. You let them do one hotel and they do twenty.”

In that sense, residents also resist new forms of control and domination in their neighborhood.

Furthermore, local struggles take place to challenge the imaginary of public officials and planners who determine what development need to be prioritized in the neighborhood and what “place” it must have in the city. This is particularly the case in Boston and Barcelona. In Boston, in particular, a long-time distrust exists towards the Boston Redevelopment Authority – which people call “Downtown Boston” – and its tendency to promote encroachment of low-income communities. Nelson Merced, the former director of *La Alianza Hispana* in Dudley explains the deeper rationale of early neighborhood activists engaged in environmental campaigns:

“Fighting against the real possibilities that they would encroach on our community. You know, I mean basically the powers that be, the BRA and the city at the time you

know, they had been and the state, they had been pushing first of all they tore down all of those houses in Jamaica Plain and West Roxbury and Lower Roxbury to build a highway [...]. It was a real fear. It wasn't a fictitious fear. It was a fear that people saw, they had seen the consequences of when the city and state decide to do something.”

Residents were aware of the possibility of takeover of their community and decided to continue taking action to protect it.

Consequently, residents are focused on fighting speculation and gentrification patterns, and this through environmental initiatives. In Barcelona, residents consider gentrification as a product of the capitalistic system and a reflection of class struggles, as professionals re-discover the center of the city and displace older poor and immigrant populations through a process of environmental degradation and real estate re-valuation. Such processes are coupled with changes in land use which authorize the opening of restaurants in areas zoned as residential. The words of Paco (2009) reveal how his environmental work in the Forat served as a platform to fight gentrification:

“Everything else disappeared. And all the storefronts, as you can see, all is closed. And if we had allowed them to do this [a parking], it would then be a park for snobbish people. The neighborhood got lost once already and we did not want it to become lost again, and we believe that with a green area, and with life there, then the neighborhood could resist this.”

Building a green zone in the Casc Antic is also means to hold the municipality accountable to its electoral promises, as emphasized by the 2002 Manifest for a Green Old Town and Without Urban Speculation: “We believe that a popular initiative to defend a green area from the threat of speculative projects and to humanize an urban space devastated by massive and indiscriminatory destructions deserves respect from the public institutions.” The green area was also thus a way to eradicate the possibility of a private investment in the old town.

Fears of gentrification are also very present in the minds of Dudley residents. They stem from a past traumatic experience of urban renewal with outside planners deciding what developments to implement in neighborhoods. For Dudley residents, city officials promise more beautiful neighborhoods – but only for a few. An activist in Boston calls this process “negro renewal,” with in mind the gentrification that occurred close to Dudley in the South End. As a result, activists, such as Alexandria King from The Food Project (2009), explain how threats of gentrification have led them to participate in environmental projects as buffers to encroachment:

“that these communities are only of value when they are gentrified. And that is something that we are really trying to resist. I think it's a huge movement to get the community members involved in what's happening within. [...] And so I feel like um, the movement that is happening right now is that we have to start being about getting our hands dirty and getting them in the ground and being able to build what we want to see. And if we don't it, will be taken from us either by corporations who will, corporations or white dominant culture individuals who will take over the land here and put up a Wal-Mart.”

Gentrification and encroachment were in fact at the basis of early degradation and environmental problems in Dudley, and were seen as core issues to be addressed first in order to then fight other ones such as environmental degradation.

Community workers emphasize the importance of achieving environmental revitalization without displacement as a core dimension of environmental justice. As neighborhoods benefit from enhanced quality of life and environmental conditions, risk of displacement increases. In Dudley, Penn Loh (2009) explains the importance of ACE's work towards helping residents remain in their neighborhood:

"Around 2000, 2001 we were at a period of time where the economy was still very, very, favorable to development. And so through the late 90's early 2000's we were seeing tremendous development pressure. You know, so all the groups that we were working with who used to be fighting off you know, this trash transfer station over here or cleaning up this auto body shop over here, it's like those economic, broader economic forces were starting to like ok, now people are starting to look at the neighborhood again to do significant investment."

In other words, in Dudley the greatest fear of activists is that residents would have to move to more marginalized and less expensive areas of the city without the same quality of life they fought for and after having lived through very difficult times.

Similarly in Havana, to some extent, the Workshops for the Comprehensive Transformation of the Capital (TTIB) were born as a response to the urban renewal projects that were launched by the government in the 1970s. The projects in Cayo Hueso were meant to respond to community needs and demands from community residents and to fight the degradation that ensued urban renewal. Mario Coyula, a former urban planner within the GDIC (2009) explains the problems created by the 1970s revitalization:

"In the 1970s, Cayo Hueso experienced a wrong remodeling with two tall skyscrapers of 12 floors each. The idea was to broom Cayo Hueso from Belazcoain to Infanta with two tall skyscrapers. The problem is that this led to the formation of empty spaces with residual areas. These are a model imported from Europe and France. There was no more street alignment. Those tall buildings convert themselves into problems because there is a maintenance problem."

As a result, through the TTIBs community workers have attempted to address negative impacts of urban renewal patterns and avoid community fragmentation and division.

The engagement of residents is often inscribed into a broader framework of Right to the City, which brings together environmental justice issues with fights against gentrification and displacement, and connects groups working on these different thematics in a mutually synergetic way. This framework is very explicit in the minds of workers in Dudley and Casc Antic, as expressed by Hubertus Poppinhaus, a social architect in the Casc Antic (2009):

"A group of neighbors and I have been fighting for years to make this center more habitable, livable, for us, the people who live in it, who use it, and not only the people who do things for the people who pass by, tourists who only use the city in that sense. We live it more. [...] We want a city for the day to day, and not only a city of party."

However, the privatization of large public spaces and the cost of renting or buying in Barcelona have tarnished the right of residents to the city, which activists are working to address. Re-conquering their right to the city means to develop projects that stem from residents' decisions, as daily users of the space and to erase the presence of the municipality and of capitalist interests in the neighborhood.

Residents underline that their projects are by the neighbors and for the neighbors and that their environmental work is a platform to help them regain a right to their city. Cities belong to people that build them through time and history. It is a creative entity through the daily actions of people, as expressed by Eduardo Moreno, a lawyer in Barcelona (2009):

“Land has a value because there is a citizenship who lives and works and makes a city [...] the right to the city is that the citizen gets respected as a city and the city is done for the citizen, and not the citizen for the city. The city does not only belong to those who own land and do speculation, which are often gangsters. [...] So when the city wants to gain power to exploit it as an object of exploitation, then the city rebels, and says “listen” and they want to build green areas [...] People have a right to the city to the same extent as they have the right to strike.”

Such beliefs are put into practice as Eduardo Moreno supports residents working for a green and affordable Casc Antic.

In Havana, the Right to the City takes several manifestations. It is present in the work of Jaime, the coordinator of the Quiero a mi Barrio gym, and of Salvador in the Callejón de Hamel. As Elias (2009) explains, “Salvador’s work is a transgression of the urban space. He breaks laws, taboos against painting and against murals. He also is in rupture against the orders against community work”. Through the murals and the renovation of the Callejón de Hamel, Salvador has given back their practices and quality of life to the Afro Cuban residents. Likewise, Jaime (2009) underlines the importance of giving people their own space in the neighborhood:

“In Cayo Hueso, there are people with a lot of needs. There are many youth in their families who do not have possibilities to pay to go to a place that charges them 10 pesos to get in to exercise and dance. Through the project, I want to give the possibility that all people who come from all social spheres are able to be here and enjoy one project. The differences that exist disappear in this project.”

The gym is thus also a means to address increasing social disparities in the city.

In sum, residents in Boston and Barcelona, and to a lesser extent in Havana, use their environmental revitalization endeavors as a platform for combating broader urban processes and threats occurring in their neighborhoods. As often long-term political activists in the city, they are very conscious of the changes their neighborhood is threatened by and re-claim the right of residents to the city and neighborhood, which lies in the capacity of neighborhood leaders to offer alternatives to the official discourses and practices promoted and sponsored by local political figures and in their capacity to control outside threats.

4.1.2 Increasing commitment to the neighborhood

While residents view their environmental and health endeavors as tools to fight broad urban changes and external threats impacting their neighborhood and the vision they have formulated for it, they also attempt to increase the commitment and resources that residents and outside forces can offer to their neighborhood.

In the absence of more resources and to confront a generally bleak situation, environmental projects in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Havana were a first step to create further impetus for action and commitment. In fact, community participation around environmental and

health projects functions as a feedback loop. As projects get developed and succeed, other projects can be promoted with a greater sense of ownership by residents. Brandy Crushird and José Barros from DSNI (2009) emphasize that projects “provide a sense of progress and hope for the community.” “[We wanted to do] something that would change the community. Clean up an empty lot and see that it would make a difference for the future of our kids.” In Havana, Jaime from Quiero a mi Barrio gym nicely illustrates this dynamic relationship: “In our country, you can not change people. You contribute a little bit to the project, you feel you are the owner, you take care of it, even though not everyone takes care of it because it is free.” Community activists very much value the environmental changes they have been able to bring to the neighborhood and want residents to see that their neighborhood is being improved. Environmental projects increase the confidence of residents in the long-term improvement of their place, as explained by Alice Gomes in Dudley (2009): “I think that when people saw a change happen that it gave them hope to rebuild the Dudley Street neighborhood area. You know, that was one huge problem. So then when the trash was gone it was like ok, so maybe we can have houses here, maybe we can have a park.” Through early successes, residents have understood they had an opportunity to change things and that, for the first time, their actions had an impact and a relevance.

Consequently, community leaders work to increase residents’ care of the neighborhood. Seeing improvements encourages people to invest time and resources in the neighborhood, in the further greening of the neighborhood, and in the maintenance of gardens and open spaces. A staff member from the Youth Environmental Network (2009) explains the self-feeding benefits of park and open space maintenance in Roxbury:

“You know they can see, even if it’s doing like a clean up or pulling out weeds they say ‘oh, this is what it takes to look better.’ And then community residents are walking by and thanking them and I think that helps bolster their feelings. They have a good feeling about the work that they are doing. So I think all of that helps to increase stewardship.”

Similarly in Barcelona, the green areas and the community gardens have created a new sense of achievement, which encourages more residents to join the initiative, as Paco (2009) explains:

“People became aware that we were creating something there [...] the kids would take the hose and I remember that at the beginning the space would fill out with people and there was everything thrown out on the ground, but came a moment where those people also would water the plants and somehow they also took the brooms one day, and parents would see this and Algerians who are more reactive, well they would participate as well, clean up, water, and the Morrocans would also feel part of the plaza.”

Every ethnic group was thus taking part in the environmental initiatives in the Casc Antic.

Several community organizations attempt to encourage residents to move from environmental initiatives to broader local development work such as more comprehensive neighborhood planning and economic growth. Trish Settles, a former DSNI organizer (2009), explains the organization’s goal of getting residents to become committed to new issues:

“It was kind of an underlying theme with everything that DSNI did -- to really get people involved in the community as a whole and not just any one aspect. You kind of lasso them in by working with them on one topic, finding their energy and excitement about one topic and then really drawing the connections between that topic and everything else going on in the community. We had people who would

come in because they were concerned about ex vacant lots. You would say ‘well if you are concerned about the ex vacant lots come and tell us at the community meeting’.”

DSNI works to help people develop a deep sense of agency and power. Early environmental revitalization was also meant to create snowball effects and build a larger sustainable neighborhood. Activists train people in building new projects, as Alexandria from the Food Project (2009) emphasizes:

“They get a little bit of an insight in understanding how non-profits work but then also what does sustainable farming really look like? And what are the responsibilities that come with that? Is it just about growing something? How do you grow something and make it work for your community? How do you market that and allow for your income to be sustained by that which you grow?”

Activists vow to attract leadership to develop new sustainability projects. They want residents to not only get compost or parks, but to come to the next neighborhood cleanup or participate in the next neighborhood planning meeting.

On the other hand, as they develop their environmental projects, activists recognize the importance of gathering outside support to gain greater legitimacy for their projects, find more resources, and expand the activities of the projects. In Boston, Brandy from the Body by Brandy gym (2010) notes the importance of cultivating, early on, strong ties to entities and people around her and not being afraid to ask for help. “Banks have to believe in it. The city really believed in it,” she emphasizes. Successful environmental revitalization projects improve the climate for economic, political, and emotional investment in the neighborhood. This is especially true in Boston and Havana, (and less so in Barcelona) as residents care more about gaining greater legitimacy for their neighborhood vis-à-vis policy makers and gathering more state support to keep their projects going. That said, in Barcelona, non-state support from outside neighborhoods and citizens’ group was very important in the mind of the Forat activists, as revealed by Eva, a squatter in the Casc Antic (2009):

“It was a combination of doing practice things day by day because we wanted to, not by altruism nor by charity, but because we wanted to do it because we liked it, and then when something bigger was happen, looking for the support of other people from Barcelona and show strength that they [the municipality] could not do whatever they wanted to do.”

In fact, activists managed to build solid support from other squatters in the city.

Much of the focus of gathering resources and bringing in support to the community lays in the capacity of projects to provide economic opportunities and jobs for residents. In Barcelona, activists have fought for a neighborhood recycling center to be created in the Casc Antic for a former *trapero* so that he could keep his profession and hire people to work with him. In Boston, much attention has been given to the creation of local green jobs, which is a current focal point for DSNI, ACE, Project Right, and CDCs. Mike Kozu from Project Right (2009) describe this emphasis:

“How can we look at maybe windmills or solar panels or what have you that would help to kind of set an example that there are some places within Grove Hall that we can actually utilize green energy, utilize you know, are there some other businesses

that we can begin to draw into Grove Hall that might be able to be environmental friendly and create neighborhood based jobs?”

These organizations also work with the Green Justice Coalition to increase the provision of funds from the Stimulus Package for Dudley. As a complement, organizations are also looking to create apprenticeship programs and get community residents trained into professions needed in the green economy. Organizations such as the Youth Environmental Network (YEN) combine the provision of park maintenance skills with an enhancement of people’s environmental literacy. As YEN makes neighborhoods like Dudley livable, it also supports the community economically, help kids remain active and increase their level of responsibility, and receive nurturing from adults. In other words, these community organizations attempt to use the neighborhood scale to achieve community sustainability, a green economy and green economic ventures, as well as community ownership and wealth sharing. These endeavors represent one of the latest facets of environmental justice work in distressed neighborhoods.

To attract more resources into the neighborhood, local groups and organizations have used environmental projects such as community gardens in order to help beautify the community and to build a different image for it. Often times, community institutions have developed visible environmental initiatives to improve the physical aspects of the specific block or half a block on which their office is located. For instance, in Dudley, Nelson Merced (2009) explains the importance of changing the physical and esthetical appearance of the area around La Alizana:

“We were working with a woman there. [...] And so I said, I basically as the director of Alianza, I said to her well I'm concerned about the public image that Alianza has. You know because we didn't have anything around the buildings, we didn't have any landscaping around the building. [...] So I said to them you know, I have two problems. One is the landscaping and the public and the corporate image that Alianza has.”

Consequently, the Alianza decided to promote the construction of the Jardin de la Amistad next to its offices as a way to esthetically improve the gateway to the neighborhood – the offices of La Alianza were located just at the intersection Blue Hill Ave and Dudley Street and very visible to any newcomer into the neighborhood.

In Cayo Hueso, the structural environmental work that Salvador led in the Callejón de Hamel has also helped to bring in outside resources since improvements have given a different connotation to the neighborhood: “It also attracts tourists who then give donations, dollars. It helps the economy of the people. Some foreigners come and give donations of clothes, pens, and we give them to the schools and to the residents” (Elias, Historian of the Callejón, 2009). A parallel impact occurred after Salvador helped fix up the Beisbolito recreational area where kids practice baseball, play, and take martial arts classes: “This also gave resources to the professors. Tourists come too and take pictures and give resources to the schools. Salvador helped to get this too. This also is an environmental and economic improvement. Tourists stop and look. They saw that the kids play.” In reality, in several cases, environmental projects are developed as a response to a lack of state resources for larger projects such as housing redevelopment, state-based neighborhood clean-up, etc. Resources to develop more structural projects are absent, as a Program Coordinator from the NGO Ayuda Popular Noruega (2009) emphasizes:

“Our original idea was to work around housing, but there were too few resources and priorities led us to direct resources to other sectors. [...] The GDIC looked for other resources and did a lot of action common social go toward work, tradition and

identity, environmental cleanup, people's awareness towards nature and environmental care."

Environmental work was appropriate and convenient at the time.

For community leaders strapped for resources, keeping a constant flow of resources from the outside is essential for project survival. Their environmental and health endeavors are showcase projects, which demonstrate to outsiders that people have an organizing capacity and a spirit of achievement. Such a reality is obvious from the words of Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym in Cayo Hueso (2009): "Iñaki [from Save the Children] has a lot of trust in me. He was able to see how in 10 days, I was able to put 2 teams together for soccer. In 10 days. So then he gave me shirts, equipment. It is important that collaborations reach the neighborhoods and reach the people who use the things, not with intermediaries." Outsiders are impressed by the results of projects such as the Quiero a mi Barrio gym and decide to support it further. Community environmental and health projects in Cayo Hueso depend on foreign resources, international cooperation, and outside contacts, which need to be constantly sought out for and cultivated. Activists thus manage a tricky balance between rejection of the outsider and a strong call for support.

4.2 Fighting stigmas and addressing exclusion

4.2.1 Erasing stereotypes and racism

Often times, distressed urban neighborhoods have to bear meanings and stigmas associated with substandard house conditions, degradation, violence, and poverty (Falk, 2004; Gotham, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002; Manzo et al., 2008). The neighborhoods of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso are no exception, and also imbued with negative images concerning their residents, their socio-economic conditions, and an overall state of degradation and neglect which residents vow to counter.

Such negative connotations stem from the history of each neighborhood and the enduring portrait of a crime-ridden area, a valueless neighborhood, and an abandoned place with under-class citizens drawn by the media and emphasized by discourses from residents in other neighborhoods. As a Dudley leader (2009) explains: "The media only want to see the badness, they don't want to show the goodness." Because of decades of white flight and disinvestment, outsiders consider the neighborhood as a ghetto and a place to avoid in the city. Greg Watson, DSNI's former Director (2009), explains the fear and distrust that outsiders still express towards Dudley: "If you go and get tourist maps there is a little black hole right around that particular neighborhood. They tell you to avoid, I'll never forget when I got there and we got the orange line maps and directions they would say 'avoid'." Dudley also became the brunt of jokes when no-one seemed able or willing to stop daily arsons and illegal dumping. Similarly, in the Casc Antic, residents were confronted with images of their neighborhood as a ghetto, as early activist, Paco (2009) explains: "[The administration] has made sure to make this a ghetto, but what we tried is for it to be a plaza, not a ghetto." Municipal reports or press releases in fact emphasized the dramatic state of disrepair, the social bads, and unwelcoming atmosphere of the neighborhood.

By engaging in environmental and health projects, activists in Dudley and Cayo Hueso – but less in the Casc Antic – are working to address such negative stereotypes and enhance the value of the neighborhood. In Cayo Hueso, Cristián Rendon (2009), the martial arts teacher, explains the vision for his work: “To change the image of the neighborhood is one of the principles of our work. It is a question of education and training. We show that it is neighborhood of people who are only a family.” Residents in Boston are also committed to showing that people of color are interested in structurally addressing environmental issues and that environmental questions are relevant for Black or Latino residents. Alexandria from The Food Project (2009) explains: “You are definitely breaking down stereotypes. And I think some of them are that people of color don't care about the communities that they are living in. That people of color don't care about their health.” Changing stigmas about the neighborhood and its residents is particularly important in a context where minority populations are pointed at for high obesity, cardiovascular disease rates, and often accused by the media of not taking care of themselves or their families more generally.

Beyond contesting stigmas and preconceived opinions, activists in Dudley and Cayo Hueso are directly fighting racism towards residents. Activists emphasize that their work is a means to resist “internalized oppression,” “institutionalized racism,” “cultural racism,” and “interpersonal racism.” Alice Gomes, a former environmental organizer in Dudley (2009), contextualizes the illegal dumping residents had to suffer without any intervention from public authorities who were closing their eyes:

“It was racism. I mean what other community can they go in and do what they did in Roxbury back then and get away with it. It was racism and I think it was classism also. Because again it was a working, immigrant community and people were trying to make ends meet.”

In that regard, racism takes multiple forms in the experiences of residents in marginalized urban residents. Consequently, environmental projects have served as a tool to address racial discriminations. For instance, bringing youth together in an urban farm such as The Food Project lot helps decrease preconceived racial opinions from suburban youth towards urban youth, and often times reciprocally. Projects also breach racial divide, as Kathe from the Haley House (2009) expresses: “Boston has a log of lingering racial and economic divides and that café cuts through this.” Visitors develop thick interconnections and develop a mutually beneficial relation.

Likewise, in Cayo Hueso, some of the initiatives led by residents are centered around fighting subdued expressions of racism and marginalization of Afro Cubans in the Cuban society. In Cuba, the victory of 1959 brought with it the need to construct a new national identity and a new definition of “Cubanity” – putting aside and burying any other. As a result, the identity of Afro Cubans as blacks got diluted in the slogan of integration (Morales Dominguez, 2004). The issue of race got also eliminated from public debate, as it was considered contra-revolutionary and divisionist, as well as a taboo topic (De la Fuente, 2000; Hernández et al., 2004). Many of the racist ideologies present in people's minds as Castro took power got displaced to private spaces and the daily life through small acts of exclusion and the use of racial labels (De la Fuente, 2000). Consequently, in Havana, being marginal and being marginalized has been closely related to the racial prejudices against the forms of expression of Afro Cubans, which was, for a long time a taboo topic in Cuban politics and culture (Hernández et al., 2004).

The fights of some Afro Cuban leaders involve a strong component of resistance and a

constructive proposal against a certain form of domination, alienation, or paternalistic attitude of a core culture which rejects alternative behaviors as secondary, subordinate, or disturbing. Afrocubans have been eager to have their voice heard and legitimized, and wanted to participate, in their own way, in the making of the Cuban society. Elias from the Callejón de Hamel (2009) explains how Salvador has aimed at constructing a racial democracy with a change of mentalities and attitudes, and at opening up a space for transgressing the standards of the Cuban culture:

“Here we promote the Callejón de Hamel in a different way from what the Cuban government does [...]. In general, many people considered the rumba as something pornographic. The fact is that religion did not fit with the image of the Che and with the atheist regime. [...]. You don't just take away taboos here. There is a strong preconceived opinion against religion and against race. [Salvador] did this transformation and transgression from his own private initiative. [...]. The State built a stereotype around the Callejón de Hamel. In Cuba, the open street festivals got prohibited because African religion parties promote more dark things in life.”

Consequently, the victims of such policies were often Afrocubans from Cayo Hueso.

Over time, as community gardens, parks, and other revitalization projects physically transform each neighborhood, they slowly contribute to changing its connotation, especially in Dudley and Cayo Hueso. The accounts of community leaders underline how projects have become landmarks and increased the legitimacy of the neighborhood and its activities. In return, projects, and the new image they carry, have created some also sort of buffer against violence and drug trafficking, as the coordinator of the Savin Mayhood coordinator (2009) explains: “The press puts a lot of things about the neighborhood that are wrong. Garden helps change the image of the city. Gangs don't do the bad things in the garden.” In sum, projects enhance the value of the neighborhood vis-à-vis the city and the broader culture, and create obstacles against negative activities that have contributed to degrading the image of the neighborhood.

4.2.2 Dignifying the space and reducing residents' vulnerability

The question of dignity is very present in the mind of activists. Residents fight against being considered second-tier citizens in their own neighborhood, witnessing powerlessly its destruction and abandonment, and bearing with daily substandard conditions of filth, noise, and crumbling buildings. As Jose Barros, an early activist in Dudley (2009), explains: “When you see someone that comes and dumps trash near your house you've got to do something about it. It's not normal. Someone comes and leaves all these refrigerators and mattresses, car tires on your street. So something is wrong.” In Boston, people express the importance of equality of treatment between people: “It's just that sense of you are entitled to high quality food available, high quality education, decent living. You are entitled to having your street lights on all the time. Not just because you live in Brookline, you live in the South End, or North End it's just because you are a human being, you are part of this community” (Travis Watson, 2009). Similarly, Alice Gomes, an active environmental organizer (2009), expresses her strong sense of rightness:

“So it was pretty intense back then trying to point out what needed to be done. It was just doing the right thing that's what it was. and the city ignoring the problems that we were having back then and just calling for attention. We are taxpayers, we are citizens so we weren't doing anything or asking any more anybody else who lived in Newton or Wellesley. We just wanted our streets to be clean and safe.”

Residents feel as valuable and deserving as more well-off and privileged and vow to defend their rights.

The argument of activists is that families and individuals deserve as human beings to be treated in a more respectful way. Beyond focusing on concrete environmental and health problems, activists and their supporters aimed at showing that people mattered in the neighborhood. Father Waldron in Dudley (2009) explains the broader rationale behind his engagement: "For me, it was a people thing, not an EJ thing. Environment was not mentioned at first. It was poverty right in your face. Later people saw connection with housing and healthy living. 'Don't dump on us' did not have a strong environment focus. People dumped because this area had no clout. 'You are using our neighborhood.' People came to the realization of abuses." The fights initially situated people in a specific environment. Activists saw the people in the neighborhoods as assets to protect. In Cayo Hueso, NGOs initiated their work as part of an action of solidarity, as Joel from the MLK Center (2009) explains:

"Our insertion in the community/neighborhoods came from our motivation to show solidarity. It was a space of activities in 1987. With the crisis, in 1990, came more challenges and emergencies for our motivation [...] Our mission was to accompany prophetically the people of Cuba. This was also embodied in smaller projects. The need was the sense of a community in the city of Havana. Accompanying meant to live the process with you, not direct you. It was a grain in solving problems of inequalities in Havana."

In other words, organizations such as the MLK were committed to address growing social injustices in the city.

Concurrently, public officials are accused of taking advantage of residents, powerless victims of abuses. The words of activists, such as Paco in Barcelona (2009), reveal an impression of feeling insulted by a powerful municipality:

"Of course, when they saw this zone, such a big hole, they said 'This can not be a green area. To these so ugly people who talk and do nothing, how will we give them a green area? [...] We were very moved to see how the municipality was taking advantage of these people and later of the abandonment that this neighborhood has had, because this has always been criminal.'"

In Boston and especially in Barcelona, activists point to the series of abuses condoned by the municipality and the constant impression of being deceived and misled by public officials. Residents believe that the difference of power between low-income and immigrant populations and the municipality has led to increased abuses and injustices. In the Casc Antic, supporters of the residents, such as Lawyer Eduardo Moreno, justify their involvement in the Forat fights by a desire to contest what they call municipal lies over promises and to fight misuse of public funds from the European Union for their urban projects:

"This development in the Casc Antic is financed by the cohesion funds from the EU, but they shut up about this. I had to threaten them saying that, as this was not getting resolved, I would go to Strasbourg and ask them not to give the cohesion funds. There are some funds for the restructuring of cities, especially unhealthy cities, as were those, with bad provision, with bad services."

For residents, these controversial practices initiated in the 1980s with the massive urban projects in the old town, the "opening" of the some streets, such as Avenida Cambó, and continued with the later destruction of buildings along with the abandonment of others.

As a result, residents vow to help the powerless community members fight against perceived municipal mistreatment. They refuse to let them down and their commitment reflects a sense of moral duty to address marginalization and abandonment. As Jose Barros (2009) explains, early activists stood for the people who did not have the capacity to do so:

“A lot of people have asked us why we didn't leave. Knowing that we could have. But we, we saw that there were a lot of other families that didn't have voice, didn't know how to change the community or didn't have the ability to organize others without voice that couldn't speak English or they didn't go to school, didn't know how to get a better school. Thriving to fight for better education for them, for their kids. So we had a lot of those. Or even to clean up those trash. People would encourage to stand against the owners of the trash. We felt a lot of times by ourselves that a lot of people are afraid of telling or complaining.”

Residents have fought to speak for the underdogs and for others who did not know how to challenge the system and how to fight for neglect.

Likewise, in the Casc Antic, Forat activists organized to help older and weaker residents resist expropriations and evictions and help them regain decent living conditions. Many desperate residents approached the Associació de Veïns and the Forat collective of activists to find support against the processes decided by the municipality and for building a green zone in the neighborhood. Paco, one of the coordinator of the community garden in the Casc Antic and an early participant in the Forat fights (2009), explains:

“[We organized assemblies] in the neighborhood to make sure we understood what was happening through the words of the people who were telling us everything and to see in which ways we could confront the situations so that they did not see themselves defenseless, no? Solidarity. And the common actions were to support people, who saw themselves a little bit more well-to-do as they saw they were counting with.”

In Havana, organizations such as Save The Children (2009) insist on the importance of helping vulnerable groups in Cayo Hueso: “By mandate or by mission, we must work with the most vulnerable boys and girls. So, we were told about Cayo Hueso [by the government] [...] with girls and boys in social disadvantages.” Their work stems from a desire to address multiple forms of vulnerability: state of housing, economic problems, and social and family conditions.

In addition, community workers and active neighborhood residents advocate for being treated with respect and being provided with high environmental standards in their neighborhood. They insist on parks, playgrounds, and community gardens not to be built as temporary and half-way done spaces. They fight to obtain the best for the neighborhood with high quality, sustainable, and sturdy materials, as Jose Barros (DSNI) (2009) explains: “We always wanted the best for the community. We never settled for cheap thing. So always want something of good quality. So if we are building a playground we want something that lasts. If you want to build a house we want to build one that we see in other places.” In Barcelona, one of the manifestos from community organizations fighting for the long time revitalization of the Forat underlined the importance of high quality amenities and the right of residents to be treated in an equalitarian way. They asked for a sports center “with all the necessary provisions”, and “not a subterranean third-category sports center,” without proper ventilation and natural lighting.

Much pride arises from the neighborhood greening and the development of parks, farms, and gardens, which are a collective dream in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic. Such endeavors have re-invigorated the neighborhood and increased residents' sense of happiness. Paco, a garden volunteer in Barcelona (2009), shares his satisfaction over the community garden: "This is also a gratification for the garden to be respected and to see that people see it as part as its landscape. I think it is giving us good reasons to continue this model." Visitors stop by the gardens, admire them, and comment on the beauty they bring to the neighborhood. In Cayo Hueso, permaculture growers often describe the extensive number of vegetables collected in a season, such as bananas, vegetables, and medicinal and relaxing plants with enthusiasm. In Dudley, leaders take satisfaction in the continued enthusiasm of residents for farming and gardening. Over time, improving the environmental quality of the neighborhood and increasing its dignity is meant to help residents enhance their valuation of their place and increase residents' self-esteem. Kathe Mac Kenna from the Haley House (2009) underlines her original goal of "giving people a sense of access and pride." In the Casc Antic, members of the environmental NGO GENAB (2009), have negotiated with the municipality the clean up and greening of small neighborhood plazas to enhance the value that residents assigned to their neighborhood as well as improve their level of comfort and quality of life: "It was not for a purely environmental parameter but for a parameter of environmental quality and which would improve the quality of life [...] So that people start valuing these small details, for their self-esteem." Through environmental revitalization projects people have regained a sense of dignity, value, and belief in themselves.

4.3 Controlling the land and managing borders

4.3.1 Re-conquering the land, addressing spatial inequities, and building stewardship

To be able to push outside threats away, attract greater commitment for their projects, and change the images associated with their neighborhoods, leaders and organizations in Cayo Hueso, Havana, and Barcelona realized early on the importance of controlling the land and its uses. This has been an essential prerequisite in their minds. Environmental revitalization projects are thus anchored more deeply in a need to re-conquer the land of the community. As the neighborhood is affected by risks of encroachment, fragmentation, and division, residents and their supporters are rallying around projects that are meant to ensure control over the land and transform it from an underutilized and mal-utilized space to an environmental friendly area and a true asset. They base their claims on how they have lived and used the city until now and work to re-occupy and re-appropriate a threatened space. Ultimately, their claims are closely connected to environmental justice. As Penn Loh in Dudley (2009) emphasizes, environmental justice involves a two-tier goal with land control as central aspect: "If we are moving and helping communities build capacity, ultimately communities need to have control of the front end of the development and not just dealing with the back end." Controlling the front end of development is perceived as the only way to prevent the spreading of gentrification and resident eviction.

In neighborhoods such as Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso in which the land has been devastated by arson and abandonment, owning or managing a piece of land and taking care of it often explain the involvement of residents in environmental projects. In Dudley, for instance, activists place much importance on re-building the former rural assets of the

neighborhood and bringing it back to a pastoral and bucolic past. The community gardens that have grown through Dudley stem from the angst of residents to re-vive their connection to the land and maintain it. A staff member from Boston Natural Areas Network (2009) emphasizes how important the land is for gardeners:

“It had taken them years and years and years to get that plot in the shape they wanted it. You know people get attached with their plants. [...] It's their hard work, their own space. In a city like Boston where a lot of people are not lucky enough to have that piece of land. It becomes very personal and sometimes, actually it's hard for us to get across to gardeners that there may be somebody here after you.”

Similarly, the orchards planted by Greenworks are seen as a means to reconnect residents to the natural cycles of trees and re-knit a close relation with nature and land.

An important component of land control is ensuring that policy-makers recognize the legitimacy of uses and the tenure of the land to the community. Residents attempt to assert their own sovereignty on the neighborhood. In Boston, DSNI's early advocacy revolved around convincing the City about the value of the open spaces created by residents, as Trish Settles (2009) explains:

“The people were very closely related to the land, particularly some of the older generations. [...] So much of our interaction around the city of Boston was the use of the land and coming to agreements that the use of the land for gardening was really a legitimate use. It's just as positive for the neighborhood as the development of a house.”

Advocacy has been essential to ensuring community control over the land, which reached its epitome with the achievement of eminent domain and the creation of the land trust DNI. In Cayo Hueso, leaders have also spent much time lobbying so that the space of their projects could remain permanent. The TTIB has worked hard to guarantee the permanence of the urban farm, as Joel (2009) explained: “Rosita talked to the person in charge of urban agriculture and she helped me a lot. We offered to have the organóponico on the land. This is now a way to guarantee a green zone [...] We had a problem to solve and resorted to the urban agriculture office. It is now a green area and a guarantee that they won't take it away.” Rosita also negotiated a change in land use for the area on which the Casa del Niño y de la Niña was built.

Control over the land and territory does not stop at barren land and open space. It also includes the creation of enclosed spaces around which the community can grow a sense of ownership and responsibility. In Dudley, the Haley House reflects a desire to give residents a place they can appropriate for their own uses, as emphasized by Kathe Mac Kenna (2009): “We are giving people a sense of access and control. The response from people who walk through the door is just that people feel so so happy that this is there. It is a place that belongs to them, it's right in their neighborhood.” In Cuba, the Quiero a mi Barrio gym allows youth to build ownership over a space which they have appropriated, as Jaime, the coordinator of the community house (2009), underlines: “The community house is for all, I have said it many times and very clearly. It is not a personal business.” Similar impressions are shared by Pablo from the Casa del Niño y de la Niña (2009): “Before the kids were 24 hours per day in the street and did not have a place to play. Now, the little kids come to play outside.” In the Casc Antic, the sports association AECCA has also been negotiating new spaces for youth training at the new gym and at local schools despite the resistance of local administrations to open up the schools in fear of losing control over the activities developed there. Community groups and organizations are very

aware of the importance of ensuring a long term lease or land trust over the land and over buildings. Neighborhood new spaces are permanent or semi-permanent assets whose daily uses are decided by the residents and community workers themselves.

More broadly, as activists fight for increasing community control over the land, they also frame demands in all neighborhoods related to spatial equity in regards to environmental privileges and to balancing access to environmental goods across the city. First, local leaders stress the importance of ensuring the availability of resources in their own neighborhood and of not uprooting residents from it. For instance, Manolo, a garden volunteer in Barcelona (2009), emphasizes the right of kids to have access to recreational areas directly in the Casc Antic: “We were pushing for a park. A park is for kids to play and for a garden. I think this better than a parking. [...] Where would be kids’ recreation then? They have to go to another neighborhood? This is their neighborhood.” Similar thoughts are expressed in Dudley by Kathe Mac Kenna, the founder of the Haley House (2009): “Our primary motivation was to bring opportunities to Dudley to bring food that was healthy that was not normally available here. People can eat in their own community. They do not have to go to the South End.” Community workers also underline the importance of keeping new assets in the neighborhood while addressing spatial inequities in access to fresh food, as Jess in the Food Project (2009) explains:

“If we are growing food here, we shouldn’t be taking it other places. Especially when there is such a need [...]. Just because of the history of extracting resources from place [...]. I think it’s either a commitment to have more local fresh produce available in these neighborhoods because there is not. The supermarket aren’t close, the bodegas they have some fruit. [...] The little convenience stores don’t have a lot of produce.”

In other words, the context of a food desert has motivated residents and community workers to redress past food inequalities.

In their accounts, activists often compare their neighborhoods with areas benefiting from superior and privileged environmental services and conditions – as reference points to what they have a right to achieve. In Boston, the manager of the Leyland Street garden (2009) underlines the difference between Dudley and other neighborhoods in regards to the provision of playgrounds and gardens:

“I drive through different neighborhoods and I see what the city did for their park. They have nice playgrounds in different areas. But around here, they don’t even come through here to even look at the places. There are some in Dorchester and Roxbury, Mattapan and Jamaica Plain, South End all over the area around here. Different cities here in this area. I go through all of them and they all got beautiful gardens.”

Similarly, in Cuba, leaders such as Jaime (2009) express that Cayo Hueso does not have the same environmental conditions as other neighborhoods and emphasize the need to address these spatial inequities:

“We say that we have the State for all the social spheres. But Miramar [an affluent area] has different conditions from us. They are not equal. In Cayo Hueso, there are people with a lot of needs. There are many youth in their families who do not have possibilities to pay to go to a place that charges them 10 pesos to get in to exercise and dance. Through the project, I want to give the possibility that all people who

come from all social spheres are able to be here and enjoy one project. The differences that exist disappear in this project. Everyone has its space.” Local residents are entitled to high environmental quality and activists vie to confront inequities in the distribution of environmental privileges.

A control over the land and the preservation of the improvements achieved through the years cannot be fully ensured without a strong stewardship system in each neighborhood. Increasing the stewardship of residents towards their new environmental spaces is a core objective of several community groups and organizations. In Dudley, organizations such as the Urban Environmental Institute, the Boston Schoolyard Initiative, the Food Project, or the Youth Environmental Network devote much work to building a strong connection between people, their land, and its resources in order to increase social capital around the territory and enhance the value that residents assign to the land, as a staff from the Youth Environmental Network explains:

“This summer we had youth employment programs that we helped support with twelve different organizations and there was about 130 additional youth working in the park stewardship, in community jobs [...]. And one is finding out about green space that they didn't know existed right there where they live [...] And then community residents are walking by and thanking them and I think that helps bolster their feelings. [...]. So I think all of that helps to increase stewardship.”

Likewise, Peter Bowne from Earthworks (2009) explains the importance of community caring for the orchards planted in Dudley: It's something that the neighbors take care of. It doesn't, you don't get much for the first couple of years, you know. It takes some commitment. And even though individuals in neighborhoods change, people move, people sell houses, people move on, you will find neighborhoods come sort of around an orchard.” Without proper care, the orchards would become unproductive and abandoned over time.

In a similar fashion, in the Casc Antic, building a strong behavior of stewardship towards the new spaces in the Forat is also omnipresent in the minds of neighbors who encourage community participation in the community garden and in environmental education workshops. In addition, residents engage in community policing to ensure that outsiders do not steal the harvest of the garden, destroy to playgrounds for kids, and so that they show greater respect for the landscape. In Cayo Hueso, the park and green space clean-up brigades organized by Pablo and Rosa from the Casa del Niño y de la Niña are meant to enhance residents' stewardship towards the environmental improvements in the neighborhood by teaching kids how to take care of their green assets and encouraging them to share their accomplishments with their friends and families. Residents around the organopónico farm and the permaculture spaces also engage in community policing to prevent dumping and ensure that the space remains clean.

In short, the need to protect the land and be a good steward is crucial so that residents do not lose their community and its assets, sell the land, or let it become abandoned. It is also essential for open spaces to be cared for so that they do not become a dumping ground and a liability. This is particularly true in Boston where staff from the Parks and Recreation Department (2009) puts a strong emphasis on communities becoming stewards of their own spaces rather than the City of Boston taking full responsibility for maintaining parks, playgrounds, or community gardens. Community stewardship towards open spaces generally starts at the time of park or community garden design as community members reflect on the

types of amenities and composition of the space to make it easily being taken care of by neighbors and to deter unwanted social behavior such as drug dealing, which was very important for the creation of the Dennis Street park in Dudley. Activists emphasize that open space stewardship must also be strongly associated with surrounding housing maintenance by residents themselves to make the neighborhood attractive for families. Eventually, in the minds of activists, securing control over the land and the uses decided by community members and achieving a greater sense of physical and mental ownership over a territory will help construct greater environmental justice.

4.3.2 Setting up physical, social, symbolic, and cultural borders

To achieve territorial control, neighborhood sovereignty, and at times, superiority over an outside group in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, residents have built clear borders with outsiders in a process of differentiation of “us” versus “them”. Three main types of borders determine relations in or among societies and between dominated people and a dominant culture (Wilson & Donnan, 1998): Geopolitical or physical borders that define tangible territories and serve as rallying point for communities; social and symbolic borders that define memberships in collectivities; and cultural borders that separate worlds of meaning among people. Symbolic boundaries are “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” whereas “social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities.” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002), p.168. Symbolic boundaries cluster people into groups and produce feelings of similarity and group membership. The properties of boundaries (which is a term often used interchangeably with “borders”) is that they are permeable, salient, durable, and visible and that they can be crossed, dissolved, activated, maintained, or transposed (Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007).

- Physical boundaries

The set up of physical boundaries has been particularly important for local residents to gain control over their territory and over the development and survival of their environmental revitalization endeavors. Physical boundaries help maintain undesirable outsiders outside and make visible and salient the territory limits. Some of the environmental projects are actually borders themselves.

In the early years of Dudley’s mobilization against trash dumping and abandonment, people stood up physically at street corners to denounce the companies practicing dumping and preventing them from accessing empty lots. They used their bodies as physical buffers between the dumping areas and the adjacent community gardens, standing literally in front of the contractors’ trucks. Further, a space such as Dudley Common, the small neighborhood park at the corner of Blue Hill Ave and Dudley Street, marks a clear entrance to the neighborhood and helps showcase with pride the different projects achieved for the residents. This landmark indicates where residents have gained control and what their new neighborhood looks like. Fences and gates to the various community gardens in the neighborhood also create visible limits of the spaces in which outsiders do not have the right to enter without permission. They allow for a control of the activities in the garden and mark the ownership of the space. It is a space to be protected, away from outside threats, violence, and drug trafficking. Parks and playgrounds

themselves are borders against illegal activities, as Nelson Merced, the former director of La Alianza Hispana (2009), explains:

“Developing gardens was basically an effort of not only controlling the dumping but basically reusing the land in a way that discouraged dumping. Of course we put a fence in so you couldn't get through. But we didn't want to take any chances. And the other thing was that people wanted to plant they didn't want somebody coming in and stealing their stuff in the night. So I think there was a consciousness that you had to not only clean the lots and get people involved in cleaning but you had to sort of convert them into something.”

Activists were aware that if the lots were left unproductive, garbage would accumulate very soon and they would have to bear with new waves of dumping.

Several physical markers also indicate separation between territories in Cayo Hueso. For instance, the artistic iron and flowery entrance to the Callejón de Hamel shows where the more private and intimate space of Afro Cubans start and what types of activities take place inside the Callejón. Outsiders who do not approve of enviro-artistic projects led by Afro Cubans should just refrain from entering the space. Similarly, the signs posted above the community centers Quiero a mi Barrio and La Casa del Niño y de la Niña point to spaces that are reserved and dedicated for specific groups – local youth and kids recreational activities – and not for unhealthy leisure. Areas such as the Casa del Niño y de la Niña or the organóponico are also fenced all around to avoid dumping, theft, and destruction of the spaces by outsiders.

In the Casc Antic, the type of design and equipment chosen for the green areas developed instead of the Forat and in the Allada Vermell constitute physical markers between “us” the residents and “they” – the gentrifiers or the tourists. Early on, residents placed an emphasis on developing a green area instead of the Forat and on re-developing the Allada Vermell space with areas for kids and a higher number of trees because of the fear that outdoor terraces of restaurants and bars would take over and change the nature of the space – making it a consumption and party-like space. Residents’ fears were based on their previous experience in some plazas in the Casc Antic being occupied by terraces with fashionable crowds appropriating the space for themselves and privatizing public spaces. Equally, the neighbors’ refusal to build what they call a “plaza dura” in the Forat – a hard concrete plaza – is linked to the connection they make between such a surface and the ensuing opportunity for bars or restaurants to take over kids’ playing areas or community gardens with tables and chairs. Eva, a social architect (2009), confirms such fears: “If in the Forat, you let them lay down four bricks, then it will be a terrace as well. It is then a space that you deprive people of. What we really wanted was a green space, a green space, because if you give concessions and you cede, there ends up being terraces.” Terraces disturb the traditional neighborhood activities and push residents away.

Having a green soft space instead of a hard surface prevents cars from parking on the plaza and outside kids from stakeboarding and creating noise contamination. Such a reality is explained by architect Hubertus Poppinghaus (2009) emphasizes: “Where a tree grows, there can’t be a parking. If there are trees and a green space, you can’t put terraces either. And it increases the quality of life for sure, also from a noise point of view.” According to residents, a green space without a hard surface also increases residents’ spontaneous participation who can develop their own activities and a life together without the continued control of the police on this space, as it is often the case of hard open plazas in Barcelona. Over the years, residents have thus

worked to re-appropriate their revitalized territory and re-construct a personal use of the space, as Silvana, a community worker (2009) explains:

“In the Forat, the girls appropriate the space for themselves, they use the Bicing [the bike sharing system]. These are girls with a veil, but they have a way to appropriate the resources of the neighborhood for themselves. I taught them how to use the bikes in the Parque de la Ciutadella. [...] It is a challenge because they feel a bit alien, there is a lot of exclusion. We wished that they owned the territory with activities of sports, music, and party, and that they became the creative actors and residents of the territory.”

As this example suggests, activists work to help youth re-appropriate a territory previously occupied by terraces and temporary customers.

Last, neighbors have fought against the borders and physical obstacles built by the Barcelona municipality and have even come to a point of destroying them. In the Forat, for instance, activists took down the wall that municipal contractors had built to prevent neighbors from accessing the community gardens and green areas they had created from 2002 on, as explained by activist Paco del Cuerpo (2009):

“This space was being delimited by walls, so it made it impossible to have a life on the street [...]. These walls were also representing the houses that they were taking down, and they represented that, in these spaces, things were being done that were creating nuisances to the neighborhood – noise nuisances, dust nuisances, or nuisances due to materials. They were using the space also as dumpsters [...] So, of course, came a moment in which action was taken to take those walls down that they had built in order to liberate the space so that the could be helpful for the neighbors.”

The goal of the neighbors was to build a space as accessible and welcoming for the neighbors so that they could feel part of a project and a collective group and participate in it, while rejecting any attempt of border construction and control by the municipality, which they considered as a “repressive” and “degrading” barrier.

- Social and symbolic boundaries

Second, activists set up social and symbolic boundaries as a way to define group membership and socially acceptable behavior and norms. Such boundaries also differentiate who has access to certain resources within the neighborhood. Often times, social and symbolic boundaries are combined with physical boundaries that will mark the difference between groups.

Social and group membership is clearly defined and emphasized in the Casc Antic. On the one hand stand the supporters of the neighborhood fights – older and traditional residents, new immigrants, social architects, alternative youth and squatters, and lefty intellectuals – and, on the other hand, stand the yuppies and tourists. Residents draw a clear distinction between the Born part of the neighborhood, which residents consider as the most fashionable area of the neighborhood, full of newcomers and tourists, and San Pere and Santa Catarina. In the Born, residents feel that they do not have a place anymore. Residents are clearly opposed to the arrival of young and rather well-off people, which they called “guiris,” as Joan, an early activist, underlines: “I resisted what was a change which affected the neighbors, coexistence, traditional or normal coexistence for me, and which those snooty and designers’ projects.” Here residents equate such changes with what the municipal plans of transformation for the neighborhood.

Residents also build symbolic borders to protect their space and territory. In December, 2002, the initial planting of a tree in December 2002 in the Forat was a symbolic border against the municipality and its contractors who were destroying buildings and abandoning empty spaces. Hubertus Poppinhaus, a social architect (2009), explains how the tree constituted the basis for the further spontaneous construction of the space:

“The collective Forat de la Vergonya had a Christmas tree as a shield. It is a Christmas tree because someone literally got the idea to take the tree and plant it there [...]. Even though the process lasted several years, [the green area] started to grow, a heterogeneous thing, but really very beautiful [...] There was a moment in which it was a space, a part of it designed by the people themselves, an impressive thing.”

In other words, this space was in clear opposition with the order and clear-cut design defended by the municipality. The image of the Forat as it was built by the residents from 2002 to 2006 (and now as a permanent space) is very different from the traditional design of projects sponsored by the City.

Similarly, several groups coexist close to one another in Boston and tensions exist between them: Dudley residents and South End yuppies. Dudley activists draw a clear distinction between the two, as Nelson Merced, the ex-director of Alianza Hispana (2009), explains:

“People in Roxbury were afraid that Roxbury was going to be completely run over. By the South End and by the yuppies and by downtown. [...] So people felt that part of the movement of downtown development was to basically encompass them.” Social and cultural boundaries are also clear in Cayo Hueso: A division exists among the Cayo Hueso youth, that is between the youth that participate in the sports activities organized by Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym and by Cristián, the martial arts teacher and in the environmental cleanup activities organized by Rosa and Pablo and “those kids” who are “just” hanging out on the streets without purpose or who are looking for opportunities to take advantage of passers-by and tourists. Community workers consider that this second category of youth is to be avoided by all means.

- Cultural boundaries

Last, residents have set up cultural borders between them and other groups as a way to separate worlds of meaning among people and reinforce physical separation. In the three neighborhoods, residents active in environmental revitalization work engage in certain types of activities, display specific dress codes, or express themselves in different ways in comparison with outsiders. The events they organize or the language they use shows a strong appropriation of the territory and draws a clear difference between them as owners of the space and outsiders who are seen as threats to the stability and durability of their projects. In the Casc Antic, for instance, neighborhood activists organize regular cultural and festive events during the year to celebrate the cultural diversity of the neighborhood, organize sports competitions, and share the garden harvests with residents. Residents also have set up a clear mental divide between who belongs to the neighborhood and who does not, based on the type of clothing or attitude people display. Often times, the alternative clothing or haircuts worn by squatters or hippies is a clear indication of neighborhood acceptance while hip and fancy clothes is a sign that you do not belong there and you are not always welcomed to the local celebrations.

In Dudley, organizations such as DSNI and ACE organize symbolic events such as “ACE in the Hood” or multicultural festivals to display the cultural wealth and diversity of the neighborhood as well as to show how integrated they are into the community. Such events are meant to tighten the relations between people and more firmly build group membership, as the words from Penn Loh (2009) reveal:

“This year we are going to do EJ Hood as an outside festival in the middle of Dudley. And we want to have the visibility, we want people to come to be exposed to and be able to help define various issues that we are working on. [...]. This year instead of holding EJ in the Hood they held what you went to which was ACE in the Hood. We got people to go out and we will meet people at their doors.”

Outsiders witnessing such events are often excluded from the dynamics of the place and its close-knot relations. In Dudley, clothes are also a cultural marker of what is accepted or not. Except for the Executive Directors of community organizations, the rest of neighborhood workers dress in a very casual and unobstructive way to assimilate more easily in the neighborhood.

Divides also exist internally within Dudley: between older African American residents, Cape Verdean inhabitants, and more recently arrived Latin American immigrants. A staff member from the City of Boston (2009) underlines these tensions and competition:

“I sense there is tension between what is called old Boston and a lot of the new groups. They grow different vegetables. I tend to see the groups just tend to kind of, Cape Verdeans tend to group together, Haitians tend to group together. Old Boston tends to group together and, I've had some kind of old Boston folks say this is our neighborhood and we don't want kind of thing.”

The tensions between groups have led to the burst of community gardens, with different types of residents coalescing around them and helping them grow. They are controlled by different groups – Dacia Woodcliff as an African American garden, Leyland Street as a Puerto Rican garden, etc – and mark clear sub-cultural boundaries within Dudley.

Cultural boundaries are present to a similar extent in Cayo Hueso. They exist between Afrocubans in Cayo Hueso and older, white, pro-Castro regime residents who often show disdain towards the cultural and religious practices of Afro cubans. Such a divide is obvious between the Callejón de Hamel leaders and some of the coordinators of the TTIB workshop, who are accused of being racist and ignorant. The Callejón is a form of cultural boundary with the dominant Cuban political views and culture. It contests traditional definitions of community work and what is culturally acceptable as an artistic manifestation and urban revitalization, as Elias (2009) explains:

“Salvador did this transformation and transgression from his own private initiative. He was a disturbance and he was inspired by culture and religion from African origin. It was a symbiosis between the religion which brought slaves and the society which had to take them and which was a slavery type of society. Some intellectuals don't want these words to be used. [Salvador] transformed a small wall through a process of transgression and this is how the history began.”

The Callejón sets us a clear difference between the traditional projects promoted by the government and a more spontaneous and anarchic project like the one led by Salvador, which residents, and Afrocubans in particular, see as a park and a safe space to meet and play.

In sum, residents in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, use their environmental and health endeavors to fight broader urban changes, resist outside threats while achieving control over land and its borders. However, as they develop such political agendas, they also frame more abstract process-centered political goals related to community empowerment and deepening democracy.

4.4 Building a different type of local democracy and planning practice

Much of the claims of residents and organizations resonate with the idea of the “good city,” a city with a self-organizing and active civil society, resisting within a framework of democratic institutions, and establishing minimal political, economic, social, and ecological conditions necessary for communities to thrive (Friedmann, 2000). The vision for a “just city” overlays the normative stance in favor of social equity with the values that guide the creation of the good city (Fainstein, 2006). Achieving a just city involves both focusing on the process of participation, contestation, and democratic planning, as well as on concrete outcomes.

4.4.1 Empowering the community: Youth development, and community capacity building

Environmental projects serve as a means to not only improve outcomes but also affect processes in the community. They offer opportunities for empowerment, leadership development, and capacity building. Residents believe in fact that they can help the neighborhood based on its strengths, as explained by Father Waldron in Dudley (2009): “We had reason to hope. We said that if we all put our resources together, we can affect the neighborhood,” and by a staff from the GDIC in Havana (2009): “Some process from below to above, an empowerment process of the community, to say it in a certain way, and this should be through a work of teams who would work directly in the community These were [community] resources that were immobilized and were not being used to solve those problems that had this same community.” Activists vowed to take action and prove that they could address issues themselves.

Environmental revitalization is a platform for community members to build their capacity to become leaders in all three cities. John Walkey from the Urban Environmental Institute (2009) emphasizes his commitment to ensuring that residents become empowered:

“We are different: We want people to have a say. There were a lot of problems with the top-down approach in the West End and the power operating [...] In the City Roots program, we are not as bosses with servants. We are not telling you what to you. The broader meaning of our work is creating sense of democracy building here, not like Irak!”

Alma, the Monadnock Street Garden coordinator (2009) explains the role of John Barros from DSNI raising the spirit of participants to take action on their own: “He described [political power] and it was sort of the opportunity to get in there and start to assume some responsibility but also then over time hopefully you can educate, people can learn ways of participating you know the process of deciding on the design of the accreditation of the garden for instance, involve people.” In Havana, the green map empowers residents to have a voice in local management issues, helps them develop autonomous decision-making, and also educate the broader community, as a project director from the Felix Varela NGO (2009) explains:

“We came in through the training so that people could participate and create advocacy/influence for the transformation of their neighborhood. It was about empowerment and the promotion of local initiatives in the neighborhood and about creating capacity for this.” It promotes the “acquisition of knowledge, the aptitude of solving problems and classifying them. And to mobilize local resources and efforts in the process of constructing sustainable communities.”

The green map is thus a tool for environmental education, management, and power building.

To achieve empowerment, projects focused on community gardens, urban farms, parks, or playgrounds entail a strong educational training and capacity building component, especially for local youth. Often times the educational goal is actually more important than the environmental objective as many kids are in vulnerable conditions, spend much time alone in the street, and require educational support and coaching. Maria, a volunteer in the new garden of the Pou de la Figuera in the Casc Antic (2009), dedicates much time to educating risk kids: “More kids come whose parents do not take care of them, or others which is not that their parents don’t take care of them, some it is the case but others have a type of education which is different from the one here, who are more in the streets.” Isabel, another garden volunteer explains the benefits for the neighborhood youth to be involved in the community gardens:

“It is very important for them to have these alternatives because it takes them a little bit away from other things which can be that are not that good for them, but all of a sudden it is their model and they will keep doing it. If they have alternative models, they will at least have the possibility to choose.”

Similar goals are present in Cayo Hueso, as Cristián, the martial arts teacher (2009), explains: “We take kids away from bad things and from being in the streets. It is a way to educate kids who have a problem of conduct at school. We are working with them educating their mentality. The problem here is that many families have arguments at home. We are trying to work on their mentality in another way.” Residents such as Cristián are clearly committed to youth well-being and development.

Beyond an initial commitment to pulling youth away from undesirable activities, projects empower kids, build their self-esteem and respect towards the community, and help them develop a stronger participation in the neighborhood. This is especially the case in Barcelona as Laia, the youth organizer from RAI (2009), explains:

“There is a garden which is being done which is community garden. [...] This is like quite an important precedent, and it is clear that without the pressure and the effort that the neighbors put since the beginning, the support and the implication of other younger social sectors, which are more connected politically and ideologically, this would not have been possible. And we especially saw the benefit of the youth growing.”

Furthermore, workers in the sports non-profit AECCA, the GENAB environmental NGO, the Fundació ADSIS, or the Fundació Comtal dedicate much efforts to youth empowerment. For instance, AECCA, uses basketball as a segue to encouraging the greater integration of youth in the neighborhood: “To promote the participation of girls and boys in the sport such as basketball and help through this sport their integration and participation in the social and territorial environment of this neighborhood of the Old Town.” AECCA’s objectives are thus very clear in regards to building a type of youth participation that eventually benefits their community as a whole.

The work of several organizations and community groups in Dudley also includes a core component of youth leadership development skills, together with a programming around public speaking skills, project management, teamwork, and accountability. ACE calls its programs REEP – Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project, – which is focused on an environmental justice curriculum, leadership program, and youth-led organizing projects: “REEP gives them the tools and skills they need to challenge that oppression and achieve improvements in the quality of life of their community.¹⁷” Over time, REEP has nurtured the growth of youth leaders who have convinced the City to renovate two parks in Roxbury and a major developer to spend one-half million dollars to clean up a hazardous waste site. In that sense, ACE works to promote youth leadership to build the neighborhood into an advocate community with its own power base. At the Food Project, Alexandria King (2009) describes similar multifaceted goals for the youth summer program:

“They then become crew leaders of a team of volunteers that help with the harvest and with the planting that takes place in the fall and spring. So there is an additional amount of public speaking skills that go with this. Understanding leadership in the context of compassion and community. Being able to really grow through an experience. [...] And then apply it hopefully to their studies at school and the experiences that they create for themselves and their communities.”

Through such projects, youth challenge themselves personally, socially, physically, and mentally. The Food Project acts as a technical assistance and professional training organization and uses its urban farm as a tool to achieve broader youth development.

In Cuba, the Quiero a mi Barrio community center combines the offer of recreational and sports activities to local youth with training workshops for at-risk kids. The focus here is on manual and artisan professions. The training has received the support of Save the Children, as Iñaki, the local coordinator (2009) explains: “Just next to [Quiero a mi Barrio], there is a space that we were given, and that will be under the responsibility of the education Ministry, which will be a trade workshop for youth who have dropped out of school, a trade workshop for youth who are not studying or working, and that have had trouble with the law.” Similar goals and successes are related by Cristián (2009): “It allows them to grow their mind, to become more integrated in the community to have good thoughts, and be a good worker.” Cristián connects his sports classes with broader impacts on the community and with the professional development of local youth.

Some projects use health and sports activities as a symbol to give kids a sense of access and possible accomplishment, as these words from Drew Forster (2009) about the new Croc Center in Dudley reveal:

“Inside the gym there will be some high windows that face the skyline. One of the elements is called a space station, and when the kids get up 28 feet in the air over the gym and look out the window guess what they are going to see? The skyline. And then the debrief with the adventure training leader is [...] Because they are going to

¹⁷ <http://www.ace-ej.org/leep>

get up there with either a rope, ladder or just a straight up rope that they have to climb. And then they are going to be able to turn and look at the State Street headquarters and say who thinks maybe they could never work in the headquarters of State Street? Well guess what? You've accomplished this today, you can accomplish that too."

For the Croc Foundation, the new center is a vessel meant to open up opportunities not only for the local youth but also to a lot of the adults who do not often leave the four- or five block radius around their house and remain isolated.

Thus, as much as activists work with younger residents, they also put an emphasis on building up the political power of the community as a whole. As Greg Watson, the former DSNI director emphasizes, DSNI was focused on "how can sustainability be a community-building tool, or a way to develop resident power?" Other organizations aimed at building strength in the community, as Penn Loh from ACE (2009) explains: "The co-founders were really approaching their legal practice as an empowerment practice. And wanted not just to take on legal cases but to figure out how they could contribute to local leadership and capacity so that maybe these could better advocate for themselves." In Cuba, the Martin Luther King Center, which was involved in the environmental renovation of *ciudela* buildings in Cayo Hueso, had deeper goals of bringing popular education and community empowerment to the neighborhood:

"We want to offer leaders with training around issues of participation and organization, accompanying experiences. [...] We want people to be masters of processes. We have lots of diverse experiences in culture, construction, education, and productive areas. We are able to do perfectionning and training around popular education, participation, and workshop demands. There are many ramifications" (Staff Member MLK, 2009).

In Havana, popular education was meant to help people develop a leadership role to transform their community and to give them skills to organize supporters around them. The methodology used by the MLK Center was very innovative for a context like Cuba in the sense that residents would participate in the resolution of their own problems with the help of the empowerment methodology used by the center and the community organizing work developed by the TTIB.

Some of the organizations supporting residents have even deeper goals of enhancing the voice of the neighborhood in the city of Boston or Barcelona as a whole and making sure that residents are represented in instances such as municipal councils. A trustee of the Riley Foundation, an early funder of Dudley (2009), explains the broader political goal behind granting funds to DSNI:

"We wanted to make sure that government agencies were taking care of the problems, including in terms of environment and health, but also that the area was being represented in the City. One of the residents ran for legislature and as a representative. Having a resident in the house gave them leverage and clout to make sure things were made in the State and the City."

Here, outside supporters were committed to building the long term advocacy capacity of the neighborhood at higher political levels and have control over decisions taken at the city scale.

4.4.2 Promoting spontaneous participation and new democratic and planning practices

As environmental revitalization projects empower local communities in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, they also are the occasion for residents and their supporters to question broader political arrangements and democratic planning in the city while transgressing existing norms for participation and civic engagement.

First, community activists in each city strongly believe they have a right and responsibility to engage in a more spontaneous, active, and even anarchical form of participation. In Barcelona, such participation was central for early activists in the *Casc Antic*. They are proud of the spontaneous movement of construction of a green area in the Forat, which took root in popular support without a formal organizational structure, as organizer Paco (2009) emphasizes:

“We did not want to know anything, nothing about associations, about anything, and that this had come out in a people-based way. [...] We never wanted to me more than spontaneous neighbors. It was a space made by the neighbors for the neighbors where the presence of public authorities was not needed, nor desired to maintain, clean, and improve the space. Through the simple design of signs in the middle of the Plaza, participants would just write their names down and explain what task they would be doing on a particular day: planting seeds, maintaining and cleaning up the garden, continuing the construction of the playground, etc.”

The green plaza was a demonstration site of spontaneous and independent while well-functioning participation. Here, residents put much emphasis on a “real participation,” (“*participación real*”) which was the non hierarchical and almost anarchical intervention of a multitude of people on a space, without spending any money, by misusing as few resources as possible while being creative and inventive for a series of environmentally-related activities. Such participation is illustrated by the words of Monika, a squatter (2009): “We did not have a theory that we wanted to put into practice. It was more ‘we like this’ and maybe it was very spontaneous and it grew over time.” One example often mentioned by residents is of a community leader who, from one day to another, decided to plant tomatoes in the Forat, and rallied other around him to do the work and maintain the new plants.

In some cases, active community leaders and workers articulate visions for democratic practices that go beyond an active and non-structured participation, and reach the point of “self-management” (*auto-gestion*, in Spanish). Maria Más from the *Casc Antic* Neighbors’ Association (2009) emphasizes this goal of self-management: “We wanted a green area and a self-managed area with a community garden.” Residents vowed to appropriate the space for themselves as well as decisions over it. Outside the Forat, some community workers working with youth also expressed demands for autonomous organization and management of sports and recreational areas in the neighborhood, such as the “campillo,” an open basketball ground which got taken down by the authorities in 2009. More recently, self-management has been put in place for the new space of the Pou de la Figuera as the whole area was built under the principle of “self-management” to reflect community demands. Elisenda Ortega from the City of Barcelona (2009) emphasizes the importance of giving the responsibility of the space to people:

“It is not the municipality which decides what goes there. No, in fact there is an open calendar, people put their name in, propositions are being made, it’s very dynamic. To have the keys means that you are the one responsible for the material, for the

space, for a series of things, because it is a form of operation that is very close to self-management.”

Such a space is a learning process for residents in how to take responsibility in the daily functioning of the new neighborhood site.

In Cuba, behind the physical improvements for Cayo Hueso, the bottom-line vision of the GDIC when it created the TTIB workshops was to promote community decision-making. Residents needed to identify priority areas themselves, manage issues, and implement solutions, as Mario Coyula, a former GDIC member (2009), emphasizes:

“A goal of the workshops was to promote horizontal initiatives and coordinate initiatives on the ground. The GDIC tried to promote the theme of participation, particularly conscious and active participation. These were our goals. In general, in Cuba, the mobilization is very passive. It means caring things from one place to the other, or, traditionally, to cut sugarcane.”

Another way to enhance participation has been participatory diagnoses, as another GDIC member (2009) explains: “We have supported the initiatives of community leaders through initial orientations, training workshops, initial assessments, and really an attempt to not impose.” A perfect example of how community workers took action to autonomously plan projects is the creation of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, as Arsenio Garcia, one of its early funders (2009), explains:

“Rosa looked for how to do a park in a place like Cayo Hueso. She contacted the parents. She had all the contacts. She works with the kids, with the community. She is a very special spontaneous way to work and give meaning to participation to kids, adolescents. She had all the needs of the kids and the adolescents identified. She talked with them what did they want, how they would help.”

The TTIBs have thus a model of citizen empowerment and decentralization as they transformed the way people were working at the neighborhood scale and as they built local skills through participatory techniques.

Some non-state organizations have taken a strong role in Havana in sharing tools and teaching community members about processes to lead a community-based revitalization. They have provided orientation to Cayo Hueso residents while ensuring a non-paternalistic approach. For them, the learning process towards building new democratic practices seemed more important than the revitalization itself. A place such as the MLK Center helps people have an influence on proposals, on resources, and on decisions through the tools of popular participation. Its work is not based on contestation but on construction of more refined democratic spaces. Joel from the MLK Center underlines the importance of strengthening civil society organizations and non institutionalized actors so that more spontaneous activities can emerge: “Our role is to do 1) training and 2) strengthening policy and management capacity so that the processes of popular participation are more innovative and people know how to manage resources. We brought our workshops to the TTIB to empower their actors.” In that sense, the NGO offers tools to the community so that residents can make decisions and try to solve problems autonomously.

On the other hand, some independent community leaders emphasize their vision to promote a more spontaneous and non-organized form of participation in the neighborhood. This is particularly true for projects such as the community gym Quiero a mi Barrio and the unplanned and almost wild way in which it got initiated. Residents gathered around Jaime to

clean up the filthy buildings and rebuilt them with their own inventiveness. As a result of this effort, people feel identified with the new space and contribute to its maintenance. Some projects even openly transgress the norms of participation promoted by the Cuban regime. For instance, the construction of the Callejón de Hamel was based on a Salvador being a “spontaneous community cultural promoter” as Elias (2009) explains, with people joining him little by little: “The work of Salvador extended itself little by little. Some saw the benefits of the work when he was painting walls, fixing the street, baths, and bringing improvement to the neighborhood in general. He did activities with people.” Eventually, these different activities increased the level of participation in the neighborhood and drew more support for the project.

The idea of building a more spontaneous and autonomous form of participation is not as present in Dudley as in Havana and Barcelona because organizations and groups rely less on the state in general than their counterparts in Spain and Havana and because of the existence of participatory frameworks at the local level. For instance, Tubal Padilla (2009) shares his pleasant experience of arriving in Boston from Puerto Rico and being “impressed by the number of opportunities for citizens to participate, maybe not in taking decisions, but in the definition of the issue, a high participation.” That said, some Dudley groups still mention the importance of the environmental projects helping residents build healthier democratic practices. Community gardens, for instance, are important tools for learning to discuss options, achieve a consensus, and accept to agree or disagree, as a staff member of the Boston Natural Areas Network (2009), explains:

“ When people come in to garden, the one agenda is gardening. So even people who don't speak the same language, I've seen communicate absolutely clearly over squash or tomato. You know, it's a profound community building process, absolutely profound [...]. Get a group of people to really work well together even if they don't like each other.”

In that sense, helping the growth of a community garden implies building practices and processes that lead to outcomes both satisfying participants and sound from an environmental standpoint. People learn democratic processes and rules at the micro-scale of their community gardens.

Much emphasis is given in Dudley towards the promotion of a different type of democracy – more direct democracy and without intermediaries. People are meant to experience and learn a new type of democracy through the projects in which they become involved, such as the construction of the Dennis Street Park or a new playground for kids. Tubal Padilla (2009) explains the broader meaning of his engagement in terms of democratic practices: “A social usefulness by adopting a progressive agenda of a more direct democracy with the communities managing to control their own community, and not only delegating power and authorities.” Such a democratic learning eventually creates more buy-in into the projects. Other residents, such as Pansy Carlton leader of the Leyland Street Community Garden (2009), feel that “representatives don't represent us” and that greater action should be taken for Dudley to receive higher quality playgrounds and formulate their demands more explicitly. Residents also call for a different planning practice. For instance, in the 1980s people felt excluded from early planning processes promoted by the BRA and were furious about being imposed a redevelopment plan, and thus decided to conduct a self-managed and autonomous planning process for Dudley.

Often times, the fights of residents for a more direct and transgressive form of participation reflect and stem from a concern and anger over the lack of meaningful engagement by the municipality throughout the years. This is particularly the case in Barcelona and Havana. In Dudley, residents do not mention any participatory engagement practices by the municipality. However, they do resent the attempt of control of community projects by municipal decision-makers, as a community activist explains, as was heard once in a meeting: “You always have people from downtown or somewhere telling you what you need in your neighborhood.” Dudley residents emphasize the importance of people in the neighborhood taking decisions for themselves as the ones who experience the problems.

Likewise, the fights in the Forat and reconstruction of the abandoned space with green areas were a means in the Casc Antic to contest the absence of meaningful participation opportunities offered by the municipality during the urban redevelopments in the Casc Antic: “Hey, listen to us since we are the ones who are living here, who use this space, and who can express on what is needed and what we would like those spaces to become” did residents express (Gemma and Carola, City of Barcelona community workers 2009). Community activists manifest high levels of disappointment over the lack of desire of municipal actors to take their experience and lay knowledge about the neighborhood into consideration, as Monika, a squatter in the neighborhood (2009), explains: “You get tired of saying that they can’t do things because they don’t listen to do and they just move on and act. Or you shut up and you don’t do anything or you must do something, hence the green area. What is needed is a space where people can see each other and communicate.” Here, residents stitch their desire for a greater voice in the neighborhood to the construction of a green area which allowed them to come together and take autonomous action.

Several municipality workers and residents describe in detail the disrespectful actions of the City of Barcelona in regards to democratic processes. A municipal staff member who works as a leading architect for the City explains his own experience of the municipality (2009) imposing ideas on the residents:

“It is true that for the theme of the public space there was a very directing attitude by the municipality, that is to say we were the ones who would offer what would be done and it was then done. At most, we would explain things to the neighbors. There was no bottom-up decision-process, no debate, nor a consultation with the people affected by the changes.”

A deliberative democracy was not in place. Some community supporters are harsher, naming the practices of the municipality a “fantasmatic and fictitious type of participation led by people who are bought out.” They feel that the urban plans PERIS were imposed to them in the 1980s by planners who forgot lay people when they reached power and who forgot where they came from.

Despite the fact that, in the end, the Forat has been rebuilt into a large green area -- the Pou de la Figuera, -- many neighbors share their astonishment at the municipality not taking advantage of the existing plantations and installations on the space, which the neighbors considered legitimate. Neighbors are particularly bitter because they believe that the municipality re-absorbed all the strength of the citizen’s movement by calling for a participatory process in 2005-2006 (but only with the organizations they fund) and by presenting the Pou de la Figuera plan as a consensus. The municipality is accused of having cut down community initiatives while “recycling the neighborhood actions into what they attempt to sponsor as their own project”

(Rafael, Youth educator and supporter of the Forat fights 2009). This perceived reappropriation of the neighbors' project by public officials is eventually perceived as a mis-use of public resources – since the plaza was already a green space – to just bring their own new order to the place. It is also perceived as killing any differing views in the neighborhood, as Enrique Ibáñez from the Neighbor's Association in Defense of the Old Barcelona (2009), underlines: “You eliminate all of these who have critical thoughts.” In that sense, activists in the Casc Antic accuse the municipality of having broken down the fabric of social organizations in the neighborhood by having manipulating the concept of dialogue and not having promoted a “real” participation. They do not ask for a more inclusive and well-working deliberative democracy, but rather for a new form of more spontaneous and transgressive democracy.

As community leaders and active residents organize to deepen and strengthen existing local democratic spaces and planning processes in the city, their claims also reflect, at times, broader nation-building, sovereignty, and national democratic construction demands. Activists in Cayo Hueso make a point at criticizing participatory engagement practices from public officials in Cuba. Residents resist officials' attempts to control the types of activities they organize by sending controllers or by not giving them the required paperwork on time for them to set up an event. As a community worker in Cayo Hueso (2009) explains: “They are behind their desks and never come down to meet the kids. Nothing makes sense, it does not reflect reality. It is absurd. They are trying to put obstacles in everything.” People are fed up with having to give accounts back to public authorities and attempt to gain some level of autonomy from the traditional rules and norms in the Cuban administration. Some projects seem even more in opposition with state structures and accepted behavior, which have recently been promoted again in Cuba: re-centralization, vertical planning, and control. A GDIC member (2009) explains the fight that the TTIB workshops are engaged in: “The workshop must be managed locally but this is not permitted. The state is only sectoral. What is vertical is what rules here. It is a very strong structure with inertia.” In the context of independent community-projects such as the Callejón de Hamel, activists fight for similar changes in democratic practices, as Elias (2009) emphasizes: “How do you build a social transformation? How do you create a space where there is a participatory democracy with a voice for everyone. The Cuban bureaucracy, which is very comfortable, does not want to take risks.” In their work, residents also attempt to address the incapacity of the Popular Councils to respond to community needs and demands and the difficulty of the Cuban regime to democratize itself.

To a similar extent, the local fights in the Casc Antic are connected to building a new form of democracy at the national level. This is particularly true for some of the older activists, such as Maria from the Asociació de Veïns del Casc Antic (2009) who became engaged in the neighborhood in the 1970s: “For me, it was a little bit a personal process. The fight against franquism. We started in the 70s, we were clandestine.” Activists believe that they were “robbed” of a transition to democracy when Franco died. For them, the monarchy of Juan Carlos was imposed on the Spanish people who did not have a say in what type of new nation and government they were eager to build after forty years of dictatorship. No real debate was open to create a Republic. As a result, they have taken their national claim at the local scale and hope to build a new type of local democracy that would reflect their national ideals in relation to more direct and transgressive participation and sovereignty.

The construction of a new type of democracy does not go without internal divisions and the resolution of these divisions within the community. Such divisions are particularly obvious in Barcelona – and less present in Boston or Havana – as some residents have remained quite bitter over the transformation of the Forat into the Pou de la Figuera, Eva from Architects without Borders (2009), emphasizes these divisions:

“Most of the people who were within the squatter and anti system group had a very clear idea of an self-managed space and or never asking for subsidies. Never. [...] But what happened basically is that I think there were several and a bit different ways of understanding the fight. Some were in direct opposition with the municipality and other were more willing to negotiate.”

Some activists within the Forat such as Jorge (2009) underline their early support to the Forat goals but then their later position of being willing to engage in a dialogue with the municipality and not remain in a situation of permanent self-management:

“To plant trees was the symbol that we wanted to show the municipality that we wanted a green area, but that was not an end goal for us. [...] I pay taxes to the municipality so that it does what I want it to do.’ But they were saying. ‘We don’t recognize the municipality as a interlocutor. So when they saw that we were going to negotiate, or the majority of entities were going to negotiate, [they called us] betrayers.”

Other disagreements surged with the construction of the new multisports arena in 2010 with some associations (AECCA) supporting the new space while others (youth organizations) criticized its over-institutionalization.

4.5 Discussion

Theories of urban development and urban struggles provide valuable guidance for understanding the broader processes of injustice and exclusion against which marginalized neighborhoods organize. They help situate the fights of active residents, neighborhood leaders, and community workers for improved environmental conditions in Boston, Havana, and Barcelona within a broader context of urban change. However, as activists holistically transform their neighborhood through environmental projects, they use also their environmental work as a tool to accomplish broader social and political goals that are oriented towards the outside society – the Gesellschaft. In other words, urban developments and change not only stand in the background during neighborhood fights. They are also clear targets to combat through environmental revitalization projects. Community gardens, parks, or playgrounds are a mechanism to resist broader urban developments such as encroachment, gentrification, and tourism. Such developments also represent the urban socio-economic and political dynamics that marginalized neighborhoods confront to ultimately address environmental and health injustices and help residents remain in their neighborhood.

The fights of residents also help shed a new light on the notion of Right to the City, as residents fight against the privatization of public spaces and develop new uses of spaces according to their decisions and the traditions of the place. The framework of a Right to the City is thus also a Right to their Neighborhood. However, to achieve their goals, residents must still attract the support of outside sources, which means that they are managing a delicate balance between the rejection of outsiders and a call for support. For residents in Cayo Hueso, Dudley,

and Casc Antic, guaranteeing a right to their neighborhood also involves fighting images and stigmas associated with their place while giving back a sense of dignity to the residents. Activists are attempting to change the connotations that the media, local politicians, and even residents from other neighborhoods assign to their neighborhood, and eventually increase the legitimacy it has in the city. Fighting these outside stereotypes also entails helping residents victims of abuses and treated in a non-respectful way resist what they perceive is an abusive municipality full of deceiving decision-makers. In return, legitimacy itself functions as a feedback loop, as a higher legitimacy increases the success of environmental endeavors and ensures their continuation.

The resistance to outside forces and the development of community-based environmental revitalization projects does not go, in the mind of community activists, without controlling the land and territory of the neighborhood, gaining sovereignty over it, and without setting up clear physical, social, symbolic, and cultural borders with outsiders and dominant forces – private developers, city officials, police forces, or gentrifiers. Residents express a strong connection to the land and to the uses they have developed over time through parks, recreational areas, community gardens, or urban farms. They thus aim at controlling the long-term projects and activities that occur on this land, gaining secure tenure over it, and increasing the stewardship of residents towards the new uses of space – parks, community gardens, etc. Guaranteeing land control and enhancing stewardship also requires to set up and control clear markers that delimit their territory and discourage outside forces from entering or using it. Here, a park or a community garden and the activities organized around them serve as buffer against outsiders. Porous boundaries are also present internally within the neighborhood as some environmental spaces – especially in Dudley with community gardens and in Barcelona with some of the new playgrounds in the Forat – delimit social membership and what type of community groups are welcome in the new spaces.

The rise of holistic claims of groups fighting for their right to their city and neighborhood suggests that people's political demands can be broad and encompassing. The stories of environmental revitalization in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic reveal the centrality of space in mobilizations. Environmental mobilizations are in fact situated and rooted in a specific site (Franquemagne, 2007). Struggles are both about the defense of a specific space and the promotion of larger political claims. They are also linked to notions of spatial equity, with a strong focus on addressing spatial inequalities in the provision of environmental goods such as fresh and healthy food, recreational spaces, and parks in the city. Space is a constitutive element of collective action and not merely in the background. Neighborhoods are thus iterative sites of mobilization and an emblematic place of contention for the struggle of poor communities against spatial inequalities.

Last, and more generally, environmental initiatives serve as a means to build a different type of local democracy and planning practice in the neighborhood, and in the city more generally. Building the type of neighborhood that community members envision can not occur without a deeper questioning towards 'who makes decisions in the neighborhood', 'for whom', and 'with which benefits'. Environmental projects thus become a tool to question broader political arrangements in the city, empower residents and create new spontaneous and self-managed, and even, at times, anarchical forms (in Barcelona) of participation and decision-making. In fact, in all three neighborhoods, municipal decision-makers and planners had originally imposed their order on in every single square meter of land in the neighborhoods and

left the spontaneity of residents behind. As a counterpoint, residents are offering through their environmental endeavors a space for debate which did not use to exist in the city. They aim at promoting a more direct form of democracy rather than a deliberative democracy, which does not lead, according to them, to the meaningful participation of community members and reflects power imbalances. Their goal is thus to transgress and deepen existing democratic practices in the city, and at times in the country as a whole (reflecting nation-building claims). Here, some activists are more extreme and radical than others within each neighborhood: Some refuse any type of engagement with authorities and have a profound distrust in any state representative (such as the older activists in Barcelona and some supporters of the Callejón de Hamel in Cuba) while others are more willing to, at times, enter in dialogue with municipal officials and planners.

Such commonalities in patterns of political agendas are not deprived of differences between neighborhoods. In Cayo Hueso, urban developments promoted by private interests and supported by public officials are not nearly as harmful as in Dudley and Casc Antic. Despite the increasing number of foreign tourist investments (hotels, restaurants, etc) in Cuba, their influence is much more limited in Cayo Hueso – but growing, with the recent opening of the Palacio de la Rumba. Such a difference makes threats of encroachment and gentrification more immediate and relevant in Barcelona or Boston. In Cayo Hueso, activists fight to defend their space against omnipresent and controlling public authorities as well as against discourses and stigmas about the neighborhood, and its Afrocuban residents more specifically. Activists attempt to control their land and its boundaries to ensure that they have – for the first time since the Revolution – an autonomous and spontaneous right to participate and decide in their neighborhood. Such a right, in an autocratic regime such as Cuba, can not be expressed to the level of openness and visibility as in Boston and Barcelona. Activists have to be much more strategic in the way to claim a right to their neighborhood and attempt to control the activities in it.

To a certain extent, the position of activists in Dudley and Casc Antic, and less so in Cayo Hueso, reflects a desire to achieve greater protection, which is not deprived of tendencies towards self-segregation. As a community workers and leaders attempt to control the land and its borders and provide a sense of protection for residents, they also construct a self-sustained and contained community with its selected members. They re-privatize public spaces for their own uses. They appropriate the territory for themselves and make it, to a certain extent, exclusive, and this with a certain legitimization by the municipality. Living in a more homogeneous minority neighborhood reflects not only a desire to protect oneself against threats to the fabric of the neighborhood, which can cause feelings of loss and alienation (Brown & Perkins, 1992; Hummon, 1992). It also stems from a self-declared preference to live among residents from the same ethnic or cultural group and to a sense of protection against discriminatory barriers (Wilson & Hammer, 2001). More racially homogenous spaces provide a space for identity formation and confirmation and reinforces assumed perceptions of others. They help develop and strengthen a shared racial identity, can have a cathartic soothing effect away from the pressures of inter-ethnic relations, while bolstering their ability to deal with negative racial relations (May, 2001).

The struggles of residents can be analyzed as a protest against policies that de-concentrate poverty. Such policies are often based on the assumption that inner city residents are eager to move to neighborhoods with better services, social mixity, and infrastructure and that they lack social capital (Jennings, 2007). However, such programs have resulted in significant

social capital and social fabric destruction. Residents have lost networks upon which they relied and contacts with close relatives and friends (Goetz, 2003). Social policy have weakened the organizational and civil engagement potential of low-income communities and the public endorsement and emphasis of social capital as a way to increase civic participation (Jennings, 2007). In Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, residents fight against outsiders intervening on their space and possibly splitting the neighborhood and its residents.

This chapter and the preceding one illuminate how active residents use environmental projects to rebuild a broken community from within and to achieve broader social and political goals in the city. However, such accounts do not reveal how activists have managed to accomplish their goals and what factors have determined the selection of strategies and tactics used to advance their vision and gain broader support for their work. Such analysis is crucial to help us understand the conditions and processes that might allow other neighborhoods to address long-term decay and environmental degradation. In the next chapter, I turn to the analysis of the strategies and tactics developed by activists, and explain how different political systems and contexts of urbanization have affected the selection of strategies and tactics by local leaders, residents, community organizations, and their supporters, and how activists have managed to advance their vision for their neighborhood.

5 Multi-Level and Multi-Faceted Malleable Strategies and Tactics

Residents in Boston, Havana, and Barcelona have coalesced around environmental improvements to their neighborhood, but their engagement for environmental justice reflects deeper social and political goals. While the understanding of their motivation is important for the analysis of community organization, it is also critical to understand the strategies and processes that have enabled distressed neighborhoods to achieve their goals, and how such strategies have been constructed over space and time. In fact, people are not only passive victims but also act purposefully to address perceived or real injustices. In fact, in the environmental justice arena, a variety of direct action and institutional strategies have allowed communities to address environmental and health threats.

Communities and local NGOs supporting them have achieved success in addressing environmental injustices by pressuring companies to engage in multiparty dialogues or negotiations (Susskind & Macey, 2004) or to participate in corporate social responsibility schemes (Cashore, 2006; Newell, 2001). Such schemes have resolved long-term conflict and promoted collaborative problem solving. More direct and confrontational tactics such as lawsuits against companies, direct denunciations and shaming, release of information on toxics, and pressure for greater government oversight of industrial activities (Bandy & Smith, 2005; Bullard, 1990; Diaz, 2005; Green, 1999; Pellow, 2001; Pellow, 2007; Shrader-Frechette, 2002) have also been effective in their support of community fights. Last, in several instances, professional techniques and scientifically proven impacts along with the insights of affected people have helped “co-produce knowledge” on the negative health impacts of environmental pollution, which, in turn, have improved the likelihood that state agencies or corporations respond to residents’ demands (Corburn, 2005). However, very limited research has been conducted on the factors behind specific choices and on a place-based and space-focused comparative analysis of repertoires in urban struggles, especially in the context of community organization for long-term “green” environmental revitalization.

In this chapter, I focus on how different political systems and contexts of urbanization shape the strategies and tactics that neighborhoods develop to advance their goals. In Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, activism is not confined to residents, community leaders, and community organization, but it also involves larger NGOs, national or international funders, as well as political elites (i.e., policy-makers, elected officials, municipal staff, and city planners). Through a grounded theory and process tracing analysis of this variety of actors, I explain how mobilization unfolded over time and space, what the selection of strategies and tactics consisted in and for which reasons, and how activists reached success in their environmental and health endeavors. I dedicate close attention to the development of strategies and tactics by residents and organizations and to the processes that have prompted them to make specific choices. As shown in Figure 12 below and developed throughout the chapter, despite organizing in drastically different contexts, the findings reveal that activists tend to resort to similar strategic choices to achieve their objectives. These choices include the development of bricolage for resource seeking and sharing, broad and unexpected coalitions, as well as a clever use of political structures. They also resort to community identity and place attachment as a core strategy to bring residents together and promote participation.

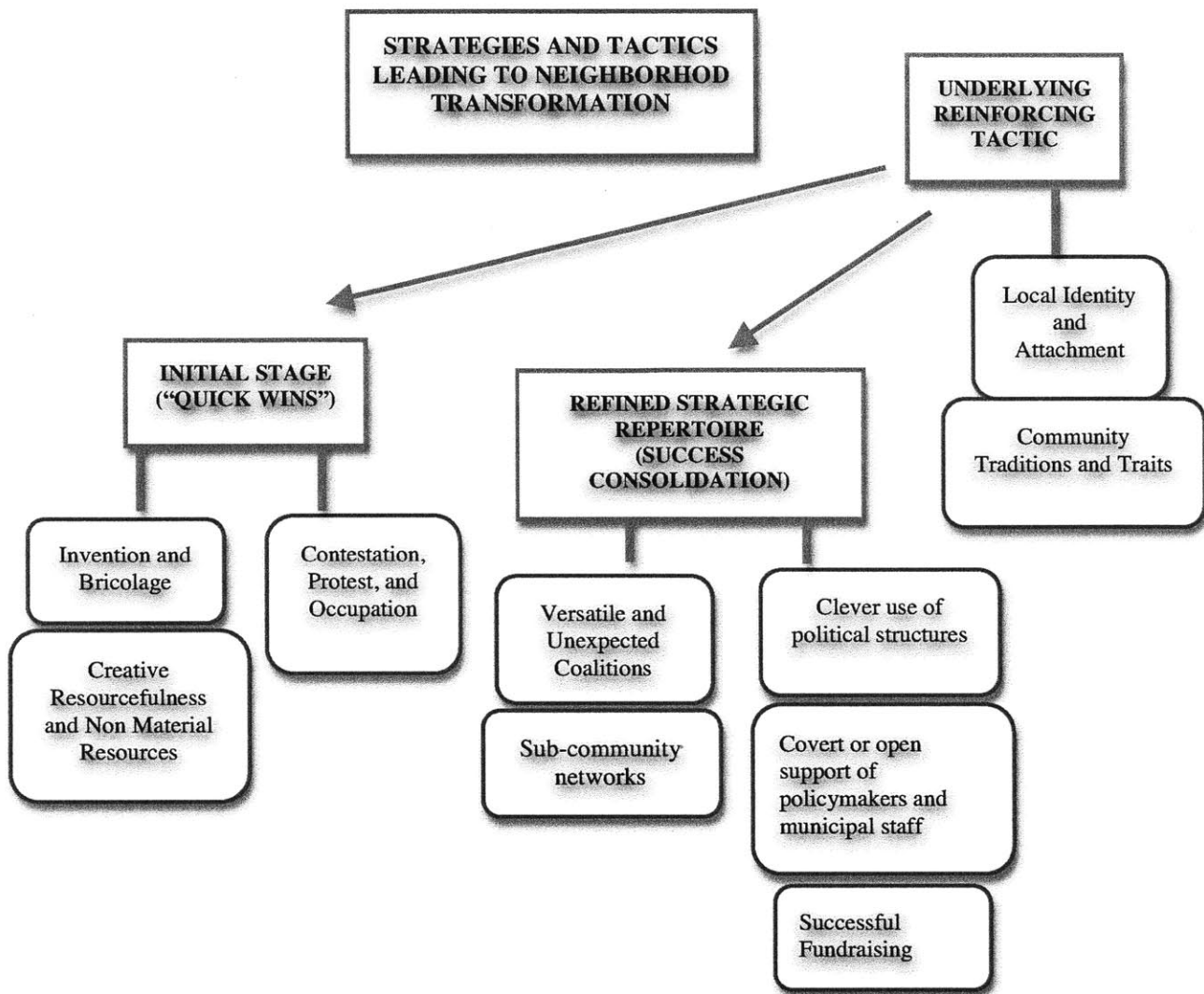


Figure 12: Multifaceted and Multi-tiered Strategies and Tactics

5.1 Initial stage of creative stitching and contestation

In early stages of neighborhood reconstruction, active residents and community leaders in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley have resorted to contestation and protest tactics assorted with “bricolage” techniques to seek and share resources for local environmental revitalization projects.

5.1.1 Invention and bricolage

The idea of bricolage refers to actions and thoughts based on objects that pre-exist in someone’s environment. People piece or assemble disconnected things together and act often in inventive ways (Lévi-Strauss, 1962). In doing so, they manage to create a new object, place, or project that reflect their vision. In a collective project, everyone puts her or his grain of salt and

takes advantage of her or his venture point and capacity to contribute to a project. This has been the case of residents in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana. In the Casc Antic, activists who took the lead in the spontaneous reconstruction of the Forat were initially very creative in assembling resources: Some neighbors would bring plants, others would build benches and playgrounds, a mayor from Sicily would send trees, older residents would put together community gardens, and young people would ensure the clean-up and maintenance of the space, as Paco del Cuerpo (2009) explains:

“Many neighborhoods started here to clean and to plant things that we, we wanted, trees that were given to us, or trees that we would look for at the Feria [...] We did a vegetable garden how we could. We prepared it, we the neighbors. We cleaned it, we planted things.”

These active endeavors led to a beautiful and concrete outcome, as summarized by Hubertus, a social architect in the Casc Antic (2009): “A park that was designed by people themselves, an impressive thing. They had even done furniture for kids.” Residents took disparate objects, natural elements, and materials to create community gardens and a park, which was based only on their own capacity to assemble elements together and revive an abandoned area, all without any major investments.

To a similar extent, activists in Dudley developed collage practices to achieve the construction of parks, playgrounds, and community gardens. This patchwork technique consisted in residents, workers, and community leaders assembling resources together on their own. Often times, their decision was based on a quick reaction to the demands of residents – for instance for the extension community gardens – and to environmental issues. Trish Settles, a former environmental organizer at DSNI (2009), relates the work of residents coming together around the creation of a new park in Dudley:

“Whether the resources are just stack time to another community, neighborhood clean up or ‘look hey we’ve got money to put into benches and Dennis Street park was one of these parks where well hey, we’ve got a resource how do we do it? Let’s put benches here and here. Oh, we’ve got another resource.’ And maybe like the resources are tiny, very piece meal for a long time but at some point after doing a piece meal project for a long time, it develops enough of kind of a community momentum around it that it really drives itself.”

Dorchester Bay Development Corporation used similar techniques, as Jeanne Dubois (2009) underlines: “We did a lot of clean ups here and here. We did a lot of tree plantings here and here. We’ve identified other green spaces. And then we had a, we built a playground, the whole neighborhood built a playground.” In those cases, residents felt empowered enough as self-elected planners and constructors to take action, as they realized that community rebuilding required many pieces coming together early on and that they could act creatively upfront.

The lack of government resources to jumpstart community projects in Cayo Hueso has led community organizers to also use bricolage techniques. Jaime from the Quiero a mi Barrio gym (2009) was very inventive in piecing resources together:

“I started working there with community students. We did a cleaning work. We have not received any official urban help. Everyone gave pieces. One brought cement, other something else, and we did it little by little. Now, Save the Children is going to repair the toilets for us. We also have received help from Puerto Rico – they karate

practitioners from PR. Now we have a gym, a workshop for plastic arts. All the gym and the machines in the gym were built by us and by the kids.”

Similarly, Salvador (2009) explains how he stitched elements together to create the Callejón de Hamel:

“I gathered ink from the printers that companies were throwing in the trash, and I went to get it. A neighbor would keep the paint for me in her house in a barrel, another one got together pieces of electric wire and I would paint at night with a light built. Another one would lend a ladder to me. Another one would come with his car would give me a bit of oil so that I could dilute my paintings. I would use old bathtubs to create benches.”

In addition, activists have been quite aggressive in looking for foreign “collaborations,” as residents call them. For instance, leaders such as Rosa have managed to receive direct donations for the Casa del Niño y de la Niña from tourists visiting Cayo Hueso.

Collage practices do not only exist for concrete physical improvements such as parks, playgrounds, or community centers. Residents also resort to them for recreational or sports projects which require the recruitment, organization, and training of participants. This is the case of AECCA, the Casc Antic sports association, for which several mothers have joined forces to jumpstart the project, with each of them bringing their creativity, resources, and time to the project, as one member relates (2009):

“We are all carrying the loads, three or four mothers who are the ones who are here the most. I, for example, take more charge of the subsidies. Me and another mother, Montse, we stay up until 5AM. And then, a vending company from a friend, gave us 9,000 Euros in two years which have been useful for me to have a surplus and we can confront what’s unpaid.”

Likewise, an organization such as a GENAB environmental NGO initiated its programs thanks to donations from an NGO, ECOS de Barcelona, as Pep Dalmau (2009) explains: “We got the Green Point [a recycling center] and the Environmental Room thanks to a donation from a group of environmentalist which dissolved, and who gave us all the materials, computers, tables, library, etc.” In Cuba, community leaders have also been very creative in launching sports projects for at-risk kids. This is the case of Cristián, the martial arts teacher (2009): “We look for the accessories with our own means. Sometimes they sew clothes themselves. We work with things made by hand. The situation is very difficult to resolve things. Sometimes people from Canada bring us things.” In other words, leaders looked creatively and actively for different kinds of support to develop their projects.

As much as residents and their supporters used bricolage and collage for creating their projects, they also resorted to such tools in order to oppose existing practices that entrenched environmental degradation in their neighborhood. In the Casc Antic, neighbors formed large human chains to prevent machines from removing their green spaces and taking down buildings. In Dudley, residents fought against illegal trash transfers with great inventiveness as well. They used their bodies to stay at street corners and prevent trucks from entering the neighborhood and dumping their waste in backyards, as Sister Margaret (2009) relates: “We stopped traffic, we were in front of all the major trash transfer stations and we got most of them closed down. [...] Every time we saw someone dumping trash we got their license plates. People were all over this in the neighborhood.” Nelson Merced, the former Director of La Alianza Hispana (2009), adds to this account: “And they got the city to agree to close off a couple of the streets by putting up

chain fences so the trucks could not go by and dump the stuff. So you know, there was sort of a whole set of strategies to involve the community in this effort.” In just a few weeks, residents became very efficient at reporting the perpetrators of the dumping to the City of Boston. Residents also created a radio show to inform residents about the illegal practices in Dudley.

Piecing resources and materials together from different sources stems from the need to head jump projects as quickly as possible, and achieve a concrete outcome. Since environmental endeavors in Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso are spontaneous and unplanned, residents have to use their creativity to make strides. In Barcelona, the re-construction of the Forat reflects participants’ beliefs in their right, and responsibility to rebuild an abandoned area with green spaces independently from the state. In Boston, residents’ rationale was based on the need to become part of the visible landscape and scream their anger in view of abandonment, as Alice Gomes (2009) suggests, “We just needed to make noise and we were just so desperate that we all just came together to figure out how we would be heard, our story would be heard. And how city hall would take notice.” In other words, activists attempted to put themselves on the front burner as a last resort in order to have their needs heard and addressed by public officials.

In the context of a developing country such as Cuba, which became very isolated in 1989, being inventive was particularly important for residents to succeed in their endeavors. People had to look for solutions themselves for their own problems without relying on the State. In Cayo Hueso, revitalization projects took place in the context of “resolver” (resolving) or “inventar” (inventing), as Pablo (2009) points out: “We invent things ourselves to compensate for the lack of resources. For example, if we are lacking a chair, we make one out of cardboard.” However, in a centralized and authoritarian context in which the government tends to control resources and their flow, it is often times difficult for community leaders who receive materials from the outside to not have them taken away. In that regard, activists have had to be very creative in ensuring that donations reach their beneficiaries, such as working with the ICAP – the Cuba Institute for the Friendship between People – to get direct donations and bypass ministries.

Ultimately, the tactical use of collage techniques is part of a strategic goal to achieve what can be portrayed as a “quick win,” a positive and concrete environmental transformation in the neighborhood meant to strengthen the visibility of the neighbors’ action, broaden the support they receive, and enhance their legitimacy in the city. These “quick wins” and victories can then be used for later comprehensive neighborhood revitalization, especially in Dudley and in the Casc Antic. In Cuba, early wins are not as important as residents had already officially obtained spaces for community-based revitalization work thanks to the GDIC and its TTIB workshops.

Tackling illegal waste practices early on in Dudley constituted a means for organizations such as DSNI to become visible, demonstrate a concrete involvement in the neighborhood, and achieve quick environmental improvements. As Father Waldron (2009) explains:

“It was very smart for DSNI to tackle the issue of environmental dumping first issue. It was not overwhelmingly large, it had a large possibility of success, and was a common issue for residents. [...] We also stood at corners to be visible and present on issues people were concerned about.”

Jeanne Dubois from Dorchester Bay (2009) also points at the importance of early victories: “You pick something that is short term and winnable. So we’ve done a lot of that around little parks and green spaces where people say that’s a dirty lot let’s turn it into a park.” These quick wins

have kept the community motivated towards a long term goal of rebuilding the neighborhood in a comprehensive way. Early successes can also allow for the development of a greater sense of attachment to the neighborhood, as Tubal Padilla (2009) emphasizes: “The feeling of belonging can develop when people begin to understand that their actions can make a difference.” Through bricolage for environmental projects, residents became aware that they could achieve concrete improvements more easily than if they waited for large grants or if focused on housing or jobs.

Similarly, environmental projects in the Casc Antic have served as ways to achieve concrete victories area by area in the neighborhood. It was a pragmatic choice for activists, as Laia, a community leader (2009) explains: “When we got the space a bit more clean and where you could see the plants grow, the benches, the football field, the basketball baskets, well it had its reason to be and had to remain the way it was, no?” Albert from the NGO GENAB (2009) also relates the importance of the initial waste management efforts in the neighborhood, as early victories would increase the legitimacy of the project vis-à-vis the municipality: “At the beginning we had to demonstrate that the thing was working, that it was on a good path of dialogue and pedagogy when we explained things [to the neighbors]. And yes, [the administration] started to understand and the truth is that we have worked well.” Projects by the GENAB or AECCA needed to be viable first before their members could search for broader institutional and financial support. Furthermore, residents were aware that broader neighborhood changes were not going to occur overnight, so they used urban wins to keep people motivated towards their longterm goal and then turned to comprehensive neighborhood revitalization.

5.1.2 Resourcefulness and non-material resources

Project leaders were also very creative in the ways that they pieced non-material resources together in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, which from a tactical standpoint is called resourcefulness (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Ganz, 2000; Tarrow, 1994). Activists compensate for their lack of material resources by having a greater access to salient information, heuristic facility, and motivation. Such inventiveness has helped them achieve a greater impact and make their projects move forward. However, in this present study, resourcefulness takes a different and new dimension. It involves the use of culturally and context appropriate modes of diffusion and rallying of supporters, the gathering of a broad range of volunteers, the organization of youth and kids, and the use of reputation and fame.

Initially, activists rallied supporters around them in all neighborhoods, and ensured that their projects had a broad and committed public. Activists took decisions to recruit participants and then conducted outreach with their own context-appropriate tools. None of the groups used modern and elaborated electronic tools, but rather old and traditional tools, such as words of mouth, radio shows, press releases diffused throughout the city, or small donations of food to recruit people. In Dudley, Bing from the Haley House (2009), summarizes how some of the bakeries’ products were shared with the neighbors: “At various times we have gone around with muffins for people. Just to let people know what we do. You know, it's marketing but it's also connection.” Similar thoughts are expressed by Alma Finneran, the Monadnock Street Garden Coordinator (2009):

“The publicizing of the rain barrel project used the mechanism of printing a lot of flyers and you divide them up among residents in different parts of the neighborhood

and they deliver them to every house. [...]. It was done in the three or four languages of the neighborhood. So you know, on bright paper it gets peoples attention.”

In Cayo Hueso, activists called upon the “voice of the Latino”, as Jaime (2009) explains: “Through word of mouth, people spoke about the project. You can hear well the voice of the Latino. It goes far. And then someone else joins in. [The locale] took almost six months of work.” In the Casc Antic, activists were also very resourceful in the ways they gathered supporters, as Paco del Cuerpo (2009) relates: “We organized assemblies in a church, the church here above because we did not have any space. Of course, in the street, it was so cold that you would be frozen, no? And so neighbors would inform others, we looked for people.” Here as well, residents conducted intensive outreach in the community.

As activists’ accounts reveal, none of the environmental and health realizations achieved in the neighborhoods could have taken place without the active and continued help of volunteers recruited by community leaders and neighborhood workers. In Barcelona, using volunteers has allowed activists to increase residents’ awareness of environmental needs in the neighborhood and to bring numerous forces together around the Forat fights. Organizations such as the GENAB also resorted to volunteers to conduct a census of the number of housing complexes with substandard sanitation conditions and relied on old water deposits. In addition, calling upon volunteers has been a tactic used to ensure greater control over the projects and constant oversight over the tasks. Works conducted by outsiders entails the risks of not representing the needs and views of the residents, as Maria, an active garden volunteer in the Casc Antic (2009), explains: “The proposal was to do something comfortable for us. To ask somebody else to do it for 11,000 Euros, for this money, we said that we would do it ourselves. And then it would be more beautiful.” Through the help of volunteers, projects seem to better reflect the views of community organizers and residents.

Volunteers have been particularly important in Dudley in the context of environmental clean-ups. Jeanne Dubois from Dorchester Bay (2009) points at the importance of rallying a large number of residents for community workdays: “We would have people come in from other places as volunteers to clean up the green space right on Dudley between our buildings and our old buildings.” Recruiting volunteers to participate in community gardens or park stewardship tasks is also a clear tactic to compensate for the lack of permanent staff and budget to pay a private entity to do the job. Alexandria (2009) points out the value of volunteers in The Food Project:

“I think having a volunteer base is really essential. It's not just even a volunteer base but the parents get involved with the youth that we work with and actually support a lot of our initiatives around fundraising. So it's multifaceted, you have the volunteer force, which is what I call them. I would refer to them because they are huge, it's a large, large body of community members that get involved with the land.”

Volunteers thus ensure a flow of support for environmental projects.

In Cayo Hueso, all the community leaders managing environmental revitalization projects are volunteer themselves and gather others around them. This is the case of Rosa, who is retired from the Cuban television, and spends ample efforts looking for support and volunteers for further developing the Casa del Niño y de la Niña. The construction of the community gym Quiero a mi Barrio was made possible through hundreds of residents gathering forces around Jaime, who was motivating them to take part in the new project: “There was no magical thing

involved. It was throwing kindness. Encouraging and talking about the good thing that the center can bring. Plus there was also the importance of having a half-crazy man like me to do this! We did outreach to the whole community to do the cleaning. The youth, the adolescents, the adults. It was an explosion like the Bing Bang.” Through obvious passion and commitment, Jaime recruited volunteers to help him clean-up and re-build the crumbling space.

Assembling volunteer support has been translated into relying heavily on youth residents. Some organizations or groups, such as The Food Project or the Youth Environmental Networks, are essentially constituted around youth who help them run activities, by maintaining an urban farm or by being in charge of park maintenance and beautification. By making kids participate in different environmental tasks, their coordinator argues that kids will have a greater connection to the neighborhood and believe in a different and more positive future. For activists in Dudley and Casc Antic, working with kids is also a way to be more independent from municipal officials and develop their endeavors in an alternative way – not resorting to subsidies and fellowships but rather using their own strengths. On the opposite, in Havana, several community leaders, such as Rosa (2009) have actively used children to obtain a much-needed official approval:

“The kids’ playground was a dumpster. 600 kids signed the letter to the Trade Ministry. Right away, the ministry went to assess the situation and sent an engineer in 15 days. 500 other kids firmed a letter to have the lighting of the recreational area. Right away again they put it up. When the kids write, they advocate for their rights up front. It is taking advantage at the maximum of the Cuban discourse on the rights of the child.”

Asking kids to write letters increases the likelihood that projects will receive support from the Cuban government, as the Castro regimes puts so much emphasis on youth development.

Youth and kids are also important tactical tools to rally new supporters and participants around environmental endeavors. Kids have a fresh and spontaneous way of involving and integrating themselves in projects and activities, and activists thus rely on kids to later recruit their families and other volunteers into the projects. In the Casc Antic, Maria from the community garden (2009), explains this easy segue: “If you make kids participate, it is a little bit like using them, but then adults could also participate in the project if you show them how from the beginning. So the kids were the ones who decorated the fence and initiated the project. And the reception of the space would be more amicable.” Such tactics are also used in Dudley, as Tubal, an early environmental organizer (2009), relates:

“We had two children and many kids from the street used to come to our house and accepted our invitation. So we would clean with the kids and the parents would feel a little bit guilty, and they came and integrated themselves to the work. Through them, we had a network with the rest of the 10-15 year old kids of the neighborhood and it was easy to integrate them into our work.”

Thanks to a core group of kids, organizers reach other children and adults.

A last non-material resource that activists have resorted to is reputation and fame. Activists are aware that some organizations or leaders are a strong reference point in the neighborhood, and have used this reputation to achieve a greater support for their environmental actions. In the Casc Antic, community residents partnered early on with the Neighbors’ Association, which is a historic organization in the neighborhood, is respected for its commitment to the residents’ needs and demands, and is well connected to the media. The

Association has written press releases, mobilized its contacts in newspapers, or simply rallied people around protests, -- all of this to support the fights in the Forat. In Dudley, several neighborhood activists have spread the word about the importance of the Food Project work, such as Honorio, a Cape Verdean resident (2009):

“I have been working for a long time for The Food Project in the community and we stayed together a long time. I talk to the community about the neighborhood and The Food Project. I tell them it’s a good thing for people -- good food and vegetables. I talk to neighbors about buying food from The Food Project at the farmer’s market.”

Honorio is a well-known community leader on which the organization relies to do outreach.

The use of fame and reputation also takes the form of popular residents who are able, thanks to their technical skills or training, to help the underdogs in the neighborhood. Alice Gomes in Dudley (2009) has been one of them: “Folks not knowing how to challenge the system or what to do with the system so a group of us came together and decided to challenge the system. [...] I was ahead of everyone.” Some community leaders such as Nelson Merced also chose to run for office, which consolidated Dudley’s political power in the city. In other cases, community organizations recruited important regional leaders, such as Greg Watson. As Greg (2009) explains: “I do think the reason that they really supported my coming on was because they felt they needed to understand how to balance the economic development um, initiative with environment.” Watson had in fact been the MA Commissioner for Agriculture, and staff at the research center New Alchemy and was a highly skilled applicant for the position.

Using reputation has often helped leaders gain legitimacy vis-à-vis decision-makers in the city. This is the case in Cayo Hueso where activists are aware that the more recognition they can get for their project, the less likely the government will want to eradicate it and the more foreign organizations or tourists will support it. Jaime (2009) points out: “I went to participate in a post-graduate course for community projects. I went to present it to the CIERIC and they gave me a prize. [...] That gave me better guarantee.” Activists also attempt to build close relations with public figures as an endorsement of their work. Rosa and Joel from the TTIB -- both important Cuban leaders with former careers in the Cuban TV and in political organizations -- have gained broad respect in the country, and activists rely on them, as Pablo (2009) explains: “People from the party see the successes that Rosita has achieved and the results. They have respect for her.” The GDIC and international NGOs also use local leaders as tools to plan revitalization projects. This was especially true in the GDIC, as a staff explains: “To lean on these people who have a type of leadership on the community, who have social recognition, who are known, who have prestige, who have authority.” The strategy of working with head characters ensures the smooth implementation of projects and their respect by public authorities.

5.1.3 Contestation, protest, and occupation

To confront a dire situation of abandonment and neglect, residents asserted their own autonomous clean-up and community rebuilding efforts in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Cacs Antic with recurrent complaints and denunciations to municipal authorities. In Barcelona, residents complained regularly about the absence of adequate waste management, as Paco del Cuerpo (2009) emphasizes: “We always have to bring charges so that they clean the streets. You always have to call so that they can. You have to insist about things, otherwise...” Other residents or groups, such as the leaders of the AECCA sports association or the Casc Antic Neighbors’

Association (2009), also complained directly to the municipality about the absence of adequate sports and recreational facilities in the neighborhood. To accompany their demands, residents hung up signs outside their balconies with words such as “We want a dignified neighborhood” or “We, the residents of the neighborhood, want a green zone.” Others wrote graffiti on abandoned buildings denouncing the speculative and cheating behavior of Barcelona’s mayor.

In other instances, activists have had to push their complaints a step further. They threatened authorities of legal action and put additional pressure on the municipality. This was the case of Eduardo Moreno, a lawyer supporting the Forat residents (2009):

“[The politicians] hide that a certain and very high cost of this re-development of the Casc Antic is financed by the Cohesion Funds of the European Union. [...] I had to threaten them to go to Strasbourg to explain that the problems in the neighborhood were not being addressed and that the EU should not give the funds to the city.”

Similar action was taken by Hubertus (2009) who wrote letters to Brussels:

“I filed a few denunciations in Brussels so that the municipality really implemented what they had applied for in Brussels. [...] We can notice an improvement of the municipality in that sense. [...] What they wanted to do is take the money out of the environmental fund and then, on the other hand, asphalt everything and put a subterranean parking.”

Such formal denunciations helped support the claims for a permanent green space and increase their legitimacy and the chances that residents’ demands would be addressed by the City.

Similarly, in Dudley, residents and their supporters have had to complain to the City of Boston about the need to enforce adequate waste management and condemn illegal trash transfer practices. Neighbors had to be relentless and creative in their efforts to reach out municipal authorities, as John Barros (2009) explains:

“You call those that were supposed to enforce the law and they weren't taking any measures so you've got to take some drastic measure and see if they can listen. Get them involved. If you just call and say I have this problem they won't do anything but if you call at the end you ask for their name and you write down the name and the time that you spoke to them. When you call again you speak to another person and say I spoke to last week such person so you have everything recorded. It makes a difference.”

The most noise the residents made, the greater their chances to be heard, at a time where it seemed that no African American community would see their demands taken into consideration, as Alice Gomes relates (2009):

“If we hadn't said anything it probably would be going on until today. But it's the noise and the protest and being in his face and demanding and making the demands. Which were reasonable demands. Putting him on the spot and telling him to do his job. And he is representing all of us and not certain parts of the city. [...] After a while, Flynn had no choice but to do something.”

Here, residents were supported by Councilor Chuck Turner (2009)’s demand to raise the fines for illegal trash dumping and improve their enforcement:

“ People have not been taken seriously for a long time. I worked with the City Council at large so that people would pay their fines and change their behavior. I also worked on the legislative front out of the fear that this was not going to be a good enough enforcement tool.”

In addition, Turner worked locally with particular companies to identify the dumping groups in Dudley.

In other instances, the engagement of organizations and neighborhood leaders with the City of Boston has taken the form of broader advocacy work. Organizations such as the Youth Environmental Network have asked for youth employment and environmental education opportunities, which has received much support from the City of Boston, particularly through the Boston Youth Fund. The Food Project has been active in advocating for affordable fresh food and for municipal policies around the issue. Jess Liborio (2009) emphasizes the importance of the recently created Bounty Bucks program¹⁸: “We have done the outreach and have worked with the city to get something called the Boston Bounty Bucks. Where it's a food stamp promotion. Whatever you spend at the market gets doubled. So basically the food is 50% off up to \$20. It's called double your money.” At times, using advocacy has proven itself delicate, as organizations ultimately represent community voices, as Penn from ACE (2009) points out: “Bill and Charlie really cultivated and spent a lot more time than I ever did cultivating key relationships with decision makers and particularly agency staff I would say. They had to be careful about that too because you know, ultimately they had to represent the community.” Many Dudley organizations had to navigate a tricky balance between involving City representatives and remaining legitimate in the community.

Residents also put forth complaints and pushy demands to municipal authorities and state officials in Havana. They used surveys and letters prepared by children to ask them to enhance the provision of recreational facilities and safe parks. For instance, Rosa, the leader of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña (2009), asked Cayo Hueso children to write a letter to a minister about the importance of obtaining a space for the Casa. In 2004, she led a survey done by kids, which gathered residents' demands to renovate the Parque Maceo. “We sent the survey in 2004. There were a lot of complains. So they did sidewalks and opened the doors. We also planted a tree. They paid attention to us in the end, through complaints.” Even in an authoritarian regime like Cuba, residents did not hesitate to write open complaints to the municipality. However, they did make sure that the demands were formulated by and originated from a large number of people. One of the most active organizations in conducting advocacy work in Cayo Hueso has been the Grupo para el Desarrollo de la Capital – the GDIC. Even as a state-based entity, its members consider themselves as the defenders of the community projects, and often act as a broker with municipal decision-makers to advocate the demands formulated by the TTIB coordinators.

In addition to complaints and advocacy, resident-led protests were a tactic used by activists in Boston and Barcelona. In the Casc Antic, protests were organized to rally a maximum number of supporters around the Forat, demonstrate the ample number of people criticizing the municipalities' policies, and attract media attention. They were also a way to emphasize

¹⁸ The Food Project and the City of Boston have recently partnered to enable all Boston residents to have access to the local bounty of farm products at city farmers' markets. Around 82,000 Boston residents that participate in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) can use their benefits at 20 participating farmers' markets in Boston. For more information see: <http://thefoodproject.org/bountybucks>

residents' exasperation vis-à-vis community engagement practices led by the municipality. One of the largest protests was organized in October 2006 to denounce the municipality-led participatory process in the Forat, as well as the police occupation of the space, as Eva (2009) explains:

"The police came, closed the park, and did not let anyone enter the park. And so they decided to do the march in favor of the Forat. [...] The march was to denounce that there were lies, that there were discussions with the neighbors, but that trees were also being ripped off. That the space was being eaten as we were still in discussions."

In other instances, protests included residents from other neighborhoods confronted with similar problems of degradation. Other times, residents did sit-ins or stand-up demonstrations in the Forat asking for an "End to the violence against the neighborhood. Put a park in the Forat de la Vergonya." They also chained themselves up to the municipality building during a plenary session to protest the "speculative maneuvers" of PROCIVESA, the company in charge of the old town redevelopment.

In the early days of Dudley's reconstruction, residents organized massive protests to fight the constant trash dumping in the neighborhood. They felt that protests were the only way for them to push offenders away from Dudley, as Jose Barros suggests (2009): "It's trying to send a message. For example, when we picketed before when we went in front of this business we decided to go around 2:00, between 1:00 and 2:00 about the time the trucks were coming back. So we blocked the gates so they couldn't enter." Sister Margaret (2009) emphasizes the importance of people taking radical action themselves: "We stopped traffic, we were in front of all the major trash transfer stations and we got most of them closed down. And we got those who stayed to really follow very specific guidelines. Then the other thing we did, every time we saw someone dumping trash we got their license plate." Such decisions came from the residents' exasperation, as Alice Gomes emphasizes: "We just needed to make noise and we were just so desperate that we all just came together to figure out how we would be heard, our story would be heard. And how city hall would take notice." In sum, people were looking for ways to become more visible in the city landscape.

Some types of contestation were a bit more subdued than direct manifestations and protests, and took the form of occupations. In the Casc Antic, some anti-speculation movements, such as the Movimiento Okupas (Squatters Movement) were active in supporting the neighbors' claims for greater livability. They occupied abandoned houses and participated actively in the reconstruction of the Forat into a green space. Mónica, an okupa (2009), relates her experience: "[The building we occupied] was owned privately by several brothers who had inherited it. They had not lived there in 60 years and then had rented it. But then they did not take care of it. So, in the neighborhood here, people started to occupy houses." Other types of contestation took the form of press releases or manifestos signed by a large number of local groups and associations inside and outside the neighborhood. Their demands were centered around the removal of the wall in the Forat, the end of police occupation in the Forat, mobbing practices, and for the creation of green zones and sports centers in the neighborhood, as a "first order deficiency." In other times, intellectuals wrote in newspapers, such as Prof. Manuel Delgado from the Universitat de Barcelona, denouncing an all-powerful and manipulative municipality.

Likewise, people occupied areas in Dudley such as abandoned parks to reclaim their space and push unwanted behavior away. For them, such occupation was a means to show drug

dealers, for instance, for which purpose the space should be used, as Tubal Padilla, an environmental organizer (2009), explains: “Our idea was that if we go and occupy the park, then the non-desired people will abandon it, and then it is worth it to fix it up.” In other instances, community leaders convoked large press conferences to emphasize the abandonment and injustices they were victims of. These press conferences helped them gather broader public support and put greater in public authorities. In Cayo Hueso, community leaders also occupied spaces that they planned to transform, as Arsenio Garcia from UNICEF (2009), explains: “This space outside belonged to the Ministry. They were putting old iron railings, were storing containers. Kids reclaimed the space with Rosa. They occupied the space and they transformed it.” Such occupation was a first step to create the Casa del Niño y de la Niña.

In sum, activists in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley have spontaneously resorted to collage and bricolage techniques and resourcefulness together with contestation practices to ensure the jumpstart of their projects and rally supporters around them. Residents have been very creative in the way in which they stitched material and non-material resources together and resorted to complaints, protests, and occupation to advance their goals. In a later stage, they have consolidated their projects and refined their strategies by developing rich and often unexpected coalitions, using sub-community networks, and engaging in intensive community organizing and alliance building.

5.2 Coalitions, networks, and alliances

5.2.1 Versatile mixed, and often unexpected coalitions of supporters

Coalitions are usually thought of as large entities with complementary interests forming around a common issue or goal. The construction of coalitions has traditionally been helpful in supporting the endeavors of movements, especially in the case of coalitions between groups and beyond classes (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Foweraker, 2001; Gould et al., 2004; Green, 1999; Polletta, 2005; Tarrow, 1994). In recent years, for instance, some coalitions called “blue green coalitions” have formed between environmentalists and labor activists (Gould, Lewis and Roberts, 2004). Transnational advocacy networks, which often develop around local community claims or concerns and receive the support of visible and often powerful actors in the North, have also contributed to the success of movements (Porta and Rucht 2002, Keck and Sikkink, 1998, Shaw 2004, Pellow 2007, Bandy 2004, Rodrigues 2004). However, coalitions and transnational advocacy networks are strategies that not only large social movements and movement organizations build to achieve their goals. In Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, neighborhood activists have also engaged in the construction of broad and varied coalitions of supporters, and this upon the initial achievement of early quick wins.

In Barcelona, traditional older neighborhood residents have formed coalitions early on with the Casc Antic Neighbors’ Associations, squatters, new alternative youth, urban gardeners from other neighborhoods, students, lawyers, architects, publishing companies, university professors, mayors of foreign cities, movie directors, and historic preservation groups. For instance, activists in the Forat received the support of Prof. Manuel Delgado from the Universitat de Barcelona (2009), who often acted as a spokesman of neighbors’ claims in newspapers. As Hubertus, a social architect (2009), explains, “This is something that people have inside them and so if the neighbors’ movement asks them for help, normally intellectuals, professors,

respond. We have done many events, and many intellectuals and professors have always come.” Squatters were also a useful group to the neighbors through their display of energy and resourcefulness, which was crucial to the success of the neighbors, as Paco del Cuerpo (2009) emphasizes:

“We had the great luck here, of having in one of the buildings with squatters, with youth. They gave us a shot of youth and this is what saved us the neighbors because we, the neighbors, could not stand so much political pressure and so much political pressure [...] They planted, they swept, and they and they put up a face to the administration.”

Each member of the coalition, from its own strengths contributed to addressing the specific needs of community residents in regards to neighborhood fights. From 2002 to 2005, a coalition of socio-cultural associations (Associació cultural Kasumai, RAI), environmental groups (Els Verds, Amics de la Terra), community platforms, (Col·lectiu del Forat de la Vergonya, groups of neighbors, international development organizations (Sodepau), and historic preservation groups (Veïns en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella) joined forces to demand the creation of a new sports center in the Casc Antic. In most cases, members had common values and visions around the rights of the powerless whose voice is rarely heard in the city and community control, and they came together around a specific project and event, even if their interests as group or individuals would differ.

Residents also created two entities in the Casc Antic: The Espai d’Entesa and the Colectivo del Forat de la Vergonya, which both carried residents’ demands in the Forat. A third umbrella organization, the Plataforma contra la Especulació, a Barcelona-wide coalition fighting against real estate speculation, also joined the efforts. Such broad coalitions have come to gather 5,000 people, especially during protests and demonstrations. Their members took on several roles: They squatted buildings around the Forat that were threatened to be demolished, they participated in gardening activities, formed human barriers against police interventions, wrote complaints to the municipality, or legally defended detained activists, etc. The construction of such broad coalitions has helped neighbors receive protection in all facets of the mobilization. More recently, new volunteers, such as immigrants from Northern Africa, young Spanish residents, and new organizations such as the Xarxa de Consum Solidari and Mescladis – two associations working on fair trade, responsible consumption, and solidarity – have joined the residents. Local organizations have also cleverly used their historical connections to media sources, as Maria from the Casc Antic Neighbors’ Association (2009), explains: “We started to write in the press. This [Neighbor’s Association] has always had the communication media open to them. If we want something, they tell us that we can call for anything and they write a press release.” Because of the authority of the Casc Antic Neighbor’s Association in Barcelona, the media listened to, followed, and publicized the neighbors’ concerns during the Forat fights.

In Boston, several broad coalitions have formed throughout the reconstruction of Dudley. In the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, residents fighting illegal dumping, trash transfer stations, and initiating the environmental revitalization of the area connected with a wide variety of groups: Community organizations such as DSNi and Alianza Hispana, CDCs such as Dorchester Bay and Nuestra Comunidad, NGOs such ACE and Boston Urban Gardeners, local religious leaders such as Father Waldron and Sister Margaret, founders such as the Riley Foundation or the Casey Foundation, university labs at Tufts or Wellesley, and professors at MIT

or Harvard, among others. Nelson Merced, the former Director of Alianza Hispana (2009), relates the variety of supporters he gathered during the first years of Dudley's reconstruction: "We brought in the priest from St. Patrick's Church. We brought in the director of the health center that was in Uphams Corner. There was another couple of small organizations. There was a Cape Verdean organization, we brought somebody from there." University professors were particularly helpful allies in building the capacity of the community, as Tunney Lee, a professor at MIT (2009), emphasizes: "We had a lot of involvement around 1980s: an organization that later became DSNI used our study as a way to go to the Ford Foundation and carried out a successful grant proposal." Coalitions have thus been extensive, and their members have fluctuated over time, representing a wide variety of interests which coalesced around common values of solidarity, altruism, and community power.

In recent years, new alliances have shaped up around healthy eating and fresh food, and include organizations such as The Food Project, DSNI, ACE, BNAN, the Haley House, Body By Brandy, Project Right, Children's Hospital, schools, and the Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness. A slightly smaller type of alliance has formed around open space revitalization and park stewardship and brings together the Boston Schoolyard Initiative, the Youth Environmental Network, and DSNI, as well as between the Food Project, Earthworks, and the Haley House. Coalitions have also come to encompass broader issues, such as green jobs, and ACE, DSNI, and Community-Labor United. Some of the coalitions include national groups, such as the Right to the City Alliance, in which ACE takes part:

"Right to the City came up and said: [...] 'If this Right to the City kind of theoretical framework make sense to you then come and we will have a discussion about it.' So we looked at it and said this is the framework we have been looking for. It was essentially an analysis on how neo-liberalism has affected urban communities in the US" (Penn Loh, 2009).

Developing diverse alliances reveals the importance of cultivating strong ties, building new relationships to consolidate projects, and further anchoring them in the community. These wide and fluid alliances also help organizations clarify their own goals and visions.

In Cayo Hueso, community leaders also built broad-based coalitions to support their endeavors. The creation of green streets and of a space such as the Casa del Niño y de la Niña has required the support of different groups, as Rosa (2009) explains:

"400 kids wrote a letter in the government gave us the space. We received a donation from UNICEF and parents also helped to repair it. We wrote a letter to the Ministry of electrical industry so that they install things. In the letter, kids express their interest to have a playground. [...] Save the children is now remodeling a sports area. The GDIC is also remodeling gardens. Ayuda Popular Noruega is supporting the Callejon de La Paz where we do peñas on Saturdays and rehabilitate gardens."

Leaders such as Rosa, Jaime, or Cristián have harnessed support around them by also asking local teachers, doctors, musicians, and athletes for help. Organizations located outside Cayo Hueso, but which intervene in the neighborhood, also built large coalitions, as a Project Director from the Felix Varela NGO (2009) explains:

"We strongly articulate our work with the GDIC. The TTIBs benefit from our training. The GDIC is a collaborator of ours. [...] We also work with state organizations: The coordinator from the Ecology Institute; we collaborate with the CIPS around conflict mediation, with the University of Havana, SIGMA (the Instituto

de Geografia). We also work with NGOs: the CIERIC, the MLK, and before with FANJ.”

The integration of all different types of Cuban people and entities into environmental and health projects in Cayo Hueso has ensured their sustainability and their recognition by Cuban authorities

International coalitions and collaborations have been a strong part of community projects’ success in Cayo Hueso. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, staff members from the GDIC initiated partnerships with planning departments in Latin American, European, and US universities. In the United States, the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT worked in close relations with Gina Rey and Mario Coyula from the GDIC and later with Joel Díaz from Cayo Hueso to establish multi-disciplinary workshops based on community resources, which later became the TTIBs. Many exchanges of ideas and experiences occurred at that time between these institutions. International NGOs such as Oxfam also teamed up with the GDIC as well as NGOs such as the Felix Varela, the MLK Center, Habitat Cuba, among others. Such organizations opened the door for Oxfam to work in Cayo Hueso, increased its local legitimacy, and facilitated the implementation of projects. Here, promoting interests in community autonomy and civic participation came together with strengthening values of solidarity and self-help.

If the coalitions formed in the Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso have been very diverse, they have also been unexpected. In the Casc Antic, the composition of the coalition around the Forat was quite surprising if we take into consideration that a variety of members supported the creation of a green space. However, they had a common interest and rallying point, which was their opposition to the type of city promoted by the City of Barcelona. Joan relates how the Forat was the occasion to rally around a common claim: “It was like the nervous center because we would all join each other there, in a certain way. The meaning of the Pou de la Figuera would be: The union of all the protesting neighbors’ movements. It was the emblematic place around which we would all be centered with our own fights.” In other words, the fights crystallized around the rejection of existing development patterns with each coalition member rejecting them for its own reasons, and around the creation of a green zone to prevent such patterns to perpetuate: the small shops’ associations with their objective of protecting traditional trade, squatters with their opposition to speculation, historic preservationists with a desire to protect landmarks – in the end a common desire to create a socially and environmentally sustainable place.

Furthermore, new modes of functioning within the Casc Antic coalitions were unexpected, which caught politicians and medias by surprise. In fact, coalitions were effective in supporting residents because they brought together different traditions of activism and organizing. Jorge from the Barcelona Federation Neighbors’ Associations (2009) point out the importance of several traditions and norms coalescing: “It was also a way of meeting together – the new very horizontal ways of social movements to do politics with very hierarchized ways in the Neighbors’ Association, which was representative of the last large fights of the neighbors’ movement in Barcelona.” Such a variety of traditions joining forces strengthened the coalition, as Laia from RAI (2009) explains: “Without the pressure and the efforts of the neighbors from the beginning, the support and implication of other younger social sectors, and who are more involved, and I don’t know, who have more political or ideological relations, this would not have

been possible.” This diversity of traditions allowed activists to rally many supporters during demonstrations:

“To reach 1,000 people for a demonstration, you need an infrastructure, and we have only achieved this with this type of union between associations. So we did these very funny demonstrations, where everyone would demonstrate in its own space within a macro-demonstration (Hubertus Poppinhaus 2009).”

Having a large protest, with several groups displaying signs about their own priorities, ensured that the claims of the coalition members seemed broad and originated by a large and varied number of civic entities.

Similarly, the composition of coalitions working on or having an impact in the revitalization of Cayo Hueso has been quite surprising. International NGOs such as Ayuda Popular Noruega (PNA) and Oxfam America have gathered support from quite unexpected but recognized institutions within Cuba with similar interests in public debate and autonomous participation, and this to ensure the smooth implementation of their projects. For instance, PNA has worked with the Review Temas, one of the few publications in Cuba that promotes open debate around sensitive issues. Some of the debates have been very open and included community participation and leadership, or racism and marginalization within the Cuban society. They have helped legitimize practices in Cayo Hueso. NGOs have also made a point of articulating their work with recognized Cuban organizations, such as the Sociology Department and the Catedra de la Mujer of the Universidad de la Habana, -- especially institutions that promote the development of an autonomous civil society while having the goal of improving the quality of life and environment of residents.

Other international organizations, such as UNICEF in its role of funder of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, have invited famous people such as Kofi Annan to further increase the visibility and legitimacy of the project and make Cuban officials proud of their island and its projects receiving such strong attention and support. Such choices illustrate new dimensions and roles of transnational advocacy networks (Porta and Rucht 2002, Keck and Sikkink, 1998, Shaw 2004, Pellow 2007, Bandy 2004, Rodrigues 2004). Their members do not exert direct pressure or advocacy on state or non-state actors, but their mere presence in the neighborhood and their far-reaching connections ensure the development and survival of environmental projects.

Residents and organizations in Dudley reveal that some of the coalitions are not always constant and that their members come together in an unexpected way. Partnerships might be quite loose, but tighten up at crucial moments of neighborhood organization where common interests take precedent over differences in community revitalization focus. Jeanne Dubois from Dorchester Bay (2009) explains that some organizations which might at times not get along at all, surprisingly come together around environmental and health projects: “It doesn't mean that we always get along. It doesn't mean that we don't annoy each other. But I would say we basically have a commitment to work with each other. And a philosophy of cooperation. [...] We just want to have good neighborhood partnerships.” Such partnerships have been especially important in gathering support in planning the new Croc Center gym in Dudley, as they demonstrated to the funder (the Croc family) that well-grounded and effective institutions and groups in Dudley could rally residents around the planning of the center and ensure that the center would be well and widely used.

5.2.2 Sub-community networks with loose and flexible connections

As residents, community leaders, and neighborhood workers gathered broader and stable support to achieve their goals, they also worked more informally, developing what can be called sub-community networks with loose and flexible connections. They used their relations with specific individuals or groups to gather support for their projects. In that sense, not only do broad and transnational advocacy networks help address the concerns of local activists (Porta and Rucht 2002, Keck and Sikkink, 1998, Shaw 2004, Pellow 2007, Bandy 2004, Rodrigues 2004). Local networks, which conduct both advocacy and community work, can also be particularly supportive in advancing residents' vision for community revitalization. These networks are sub-community networks for two reasons: First, they are geographically made of people and groups within the neighborhood and are important from a spatial capital standpoint. Residents and leaders know each other well through the community and know how and when to resort to each other. Second, they are also sub-community networks in the sense of technical expert communities – knowledge-based experts in the (sub)-field or area that is most needed during the development of a specific project.

Leaders often resorted to sub-community networks of supporters in the Casc Antic who came to provide support in specific activities. They were friends, relatives, or colleagues living or working within the neighborhood and interested in helping residents with their environmental projects. Joan, an activist in the Forat (2009), explains the support offered, for instance, by squatters to older activists: "Those same squatters are those who came later to the Pou de la Figuera and started to help Paco. They helped us and we started to move, to do assemblies, to do meetings, and they were the ones who fixed up the plaza -- there was also construction material and trash and everything [to remove]." Local groups of active residents called upon sub-community networks for specific help. Maria, a leader in the new community gardens (2009), explains how she and others went throughout the neighborhood and used their contacts to gather support for gardening events and neighborhood parties:

"We had parties during the harvest and did something called 'Pesta Pesto.' A neighbor gave us organic olive oil, and with the harvest we did a popular fiesta with donations of things. We went to ask the small shops. We received donations of tools. In April 2009, a Moroccan woman neighbor helped us and did a couscous."

Other organizations such as the Casc Antic Neighbors' Association have called upon the Barcelona Federation of Neighbors' Association to contact the press and relate their demands.

To a similar extent, local activists in Dudley have spent ample time gathering supporters inside the neighborhood for their events and activities, which often required lots of energy. José from DSNI emphasizes how much work it takes to call upon sub-community networks: "You've got to make a lot of calls and build upon friends and relatives and everyone who calls. So you call everyone and see whoever comes and bring the youth." Similar tactics were used by environmental organizer Alice Gomes (2009):

"It was a lot of talking with people. Figuring out who's available, who is not available. What they can do, what they cannot do. How can they contribute. It was a lot of work back then. Just knocking on doors waking up Saturday mornings and talking to folks and pointing out their rights that we have rights and we can make a change if we all band together."

Talking to friends and relatives in Dudley is an easy means to build upon sub-community networks as Bing from the Haley House (2009) points out: "They are strategic alliances, you know, but they are also friends. For example, a lot happens organically." In their organizing, activists emphasized to other residents that rallying individuals should give them reasons to hope: If people pull all their efforts together, then the neighborhood can be controlled by residents and be affected positively.

The nature of the Cuban society and culture is such that people in neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso spend much time relating to each other on the neighborhood street, and end up building close ties through informal conversations or street activities. Their intimate knowledge of each other makes it easier for people to ask for help. Jaime, the coordinator of Quiero a Mi Barrio (2009) emphasizes the importance of proximity links in the neighborhood: "I was looking for a space. I went to see the Mayor of the Poder Popular. He sent me to the TTIB because they were the ones handling community projects. I talked to Joel. He actually knew my uncle the architect, so I united myself directly to the TTIB." Pablo, from the Casa del Niño (2009), relates a similar experience of becoming involved in the Casa: "I got to know Rosita through my sister. One time, Rosita told me that I should help her with carrying some plant pots and then she asked me to do a Welcome sign for the house and this is how she won me over!" NGOs such as Save the Children (2009) are also using the networks of friends and colleagues they have built informally over time in Cayo Hueso: "I used to live in Centro Habana, in Cayo Hueso, so I knew the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, Rosita, Jaime, everyone. For the past eight years I've known everything." As a result, connections have eased the implementation of Save the Children's projects in the neighborhood.

Sub-community networks have also taken the form of technical expert communities in all three neighborhoods with members from within and outside the neighborhood. These communities have provided technical and specialized support to residents and neighborhood leaders during the development of projects. In the Casc Antic, this support has taken a wide variety of forms. Members from the GENAB environmental NGO have offered technical advice to the new organizers of the Pou de la Figuera community garden on environmental sustainable techniques for urban agriculture. The organization Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella has given specialized assistance to residents who were victims of mobbing and degradation, as Joan relates (2009):

"We started to attend to things, to help them and advise them well. [...] We talked about everything, -- of what was happening, of the projects. We presented declarations, we went to the municipal district: 'In such street, at that number, there is such people selling drugs, and they live in a certain way, and there is dirt, and they wash themselves in the water deposits that people who live next to them consume.'"

Furthermore, the Barcelona-wide organization Architects without Borders played the role of planning facilitators by meeting with the Forat neighbors and drawing plans based on their ideas for the design of the green space. Documentaries also became tactical tools to be used for diffusion in universities and public forums, and acted as a political weapon as Chema Falconnetti, a movie director working in the Forat (2009) explains: "The neighbors liked the documentary a lot and they started discussing it. Then, people focused more on history with its problems. [...] It shows the problématique. I see it as helpful. You can see the political and collective proposal." Other trained specialists, such as lawyers from outside the neighborhood

also supporting neighbors by filing claims against the Urban Guard and the Ciutat Vella District for the “disproportionate use of public force” (Eduardo Moreno, 2009).

Community leaders in Dudley have equally used specialized groups and organizations for technical support and advice in their environmental endeavors. More often than not, these technical expert communities are geographically located within Dudley. For instance, organizations such as The Food Project ensure safe gardening practices by testing the soil and providing compost to gardeners. Local organizations also partner with each other on technical aspects, as Mike Kozu from Project Right (2009) points out:” We have done a lot of stuff with ACE just in terms of environmental justice stuff and Food Project as well. Food Project was helpful especially in the farmers market stuff that we are working on. And some of the community gardens. We do recruitment for their programs as well.” Health centers have also worked inside the community to address health issues through education and training, as Melida Arredondo from the Upham’s Corner Health Center (2009), explains:

“We have a strong work with ‘advocates’ around violence prevention, HIV, lead prevention, drug-related treatment, nutrition for kids, diabetes treatment and prevention, Nutrition and weight loss, asthma. We organize cooking classes with a person who is an urban gardener and lives near St Patricks’s Church.”

Residents benefit from the workshops and classes organized by the health center and learn how to eat in a healthier way.

Some organizations play the role of planning facilitators and organize charrettes – intensive design and planning workshops – and other design exercises to bring together community groups and residents around new projects. DSNI has taken such responsibility in the planning phase of the Croc Community Center, as Travis Watson (2009) explains:

“We have these design studios and what we do is we tackle one are of the community center. For example, this Saturday we are going to look at the gym. So we go to these design studios, say on average there is probably about 40 or 50 people at these. We break up into teams of five, six people at a table, we have art supplies, textiles, colored pencils, markers and poster boards. And you would actually design in your wildest dreams what you would want the gym to look like.”

Such exercises have been widely used to establish common proposals for projects such as the Dennis Street Park or the Dudley Village green housing complex, all based on residents’ input.

In other instances, technical expert communities have been made of organizations outside Dudley with common interests in environmental protection and revitalization. Public health studies conducted by universities such as Wellesley College and the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) have allowed organizations ACE and the Food Project to monitor local air and soil quality and successfully advocate for the closure of toxic facilities and the clean-up of hazardous waste sites. Furthermore, sub-community networks within the legal assistance community have helped DSNI receive legal and technical assistance. For instance, Bob Holmes, a trustee of the Riley Foundation (2009), convinced his law firm, Power and Hall, to participate in a legal case in Dudley. Universities also provided training skills in alliances with local environmental groups. For instance, Harvard University, through Prof. Anne Spirn, together with Boston Urban Gardeners (BUG) developed a professional development program in Dudley, as Charlotte Kahn (2009) relates:

“We were running a landscape skills training program, a job training program in the landscape construction. So your landscape students, who were people who have historically been unemployed, built it. The Harvard students designed it, the community selected the design that they wanted, and then our landscape students, construction students built it in order to get hands on skills.”

Such examples show that individuals strongly contributed to improving Dudley’s environmental quality (sometimes more than the institution itself as a whole). They used their capacity, their leverage power, and sometimes the institution’s resources to support residents’ efforts.

In Cayo Hueso, a series of groups and organizations outside the neighborhood have offered technical support to project leaders working on environment and health projects. Such support originated in common interests towards promoting community-based initiatives. People such as Rosa or Jaime have participated in workshops led by the CIERIC (the Information and Referral Center for Community Initiatives), the FANJ environmental NGO, or the MLK Center on topics such as grant writing, community participation, and leadership development. As Rosa (2009) points out, the training workshops have helped her develop grant proposals: “To write collaboration projects is very hard. Sometimes it’s 40 pages with a lot of criteria. The CIERIC and the FANJ have offered classes where I went. They helped a lot on how to write based on what the other side is expected.” Like in the Casc Antic and Dudley, some organizations have engaged residents in community planning, and especially participatory budgeting, so that they could to take greater ownership of the projects. This was the case of the MLK center with the Espada 411 renovation:

“We started doing some organizing with the TTIB to see how the dollars would be put together and spent (budget). [...] We had meetings every week in the TTIB with the participation of formal and non formal leaders. Through participatory budgeting and based on popular education, they appropriated the project for themselves.” (MLK Staff member 2009)

In other words, such engagement allowed participants to take on an innovative role in the project.

In its initial years, the Group for the Development of the Capital (GDIC) dedicated conscious efforts to the construction of technical expert communities, and this in Cayo Hueso in particular. The staff of the TTIB workshop was put together in a manner that promoted multidisciplinary skills with leaders living in Cayo Hueso, as a GDIC member (2009) explains:

“[We assembled people] who had a pedagogical experience and an experience of being able to communicate with people, and, on top of it, who were very known in the community. There were people who had people teachers in the communities or who came from the Federation of Cuban Women, who had a degree in education or who were architects living in the community, like Joel Diaz, or civil engineers, or sociologists linked to the community. Me, I had been working in the office of physical planning.”

It is through this experience that the former Director of the GDIC met Joel and later asked him to become the leader of the TTIB workshop, which he accepted. Such connections built the strength and technical weight of different environmental and health projects in Cayo Hueso.

Sub-community networks are often based on spatial capital. The concept of spatial capital has only been recently developed – as the intense street life in its physical setting, activities, and

networks created by marginal urban actors in the inner city neighborhoods (Chion, 2008, 2009). It refines the traditional concept of social capital, which is often seen a helpful asset for fostering the participation of community members in collective action (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Saegert et al., 2001). In the Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso, relationship building in the neighborhoods has been crucial to the success of environmental projects. People use the spatial characteristics of the place to advance their claims. In the Casc Antic, Albert from the GENAB (2009) explains the importance of the relationships with residents of housing complexes: "As we had been visiting all the apartments, we knew the Presidents of each staircase, we were in contact with them, and we communicated to them all the actions we had been doing." Similarly, the sports association AECCA was able to become incorporated through the support of friends, as one member (2009) points out: "We were like bulls and daring. Twelve mothers. Because to create the association, we needed twelve signatures. All mothers, from different nationalities, plus all the kids of the team." All the contributors knew each other from other activities in the neighborhood and were able to rally quickly to support the incorporation of the organization.

The physical proximity of some sub-community network members to revitalization projects in Cayo Hueso contributed to the birth of relationships and support between people. For instance, Roxana, a doctor whose office is located next to the Casa del Niño y de la Niña (2009), emphasizes her natural involvement with the kids from the Casa: "The link and relation to the Casa is very easy for us. We include it in our programs on pregnant women and adolescents. We do educational talks here in the casa and in our office on HIV, breastfeeding, pregnant adolescents because there are many of them. We coordinate with Rosita." Other members emphasize the more secretive practices that neighbors had to resort to in order to help projects. This was the case of residents in the Callejón de Hamel, as Salvador (2009) explains: "A neighbor would keep the paintings in her house in the barrel. Another neighbor gave me pieces of electric cable with a light bulb so that I could paint at night, etc." As the Callejón involved works night and day, the neighbors mobilized around Salvador at different times and with different resources.

Spatial ties and resources have proven to be crucial to the consolidation of projects. This is particularly true in Dudley. Some community gardens, such as the Monadnock Street Garden, took root because some residents managed to get involved through their neighbors, and later became garden coordinators. In addition, environmental NGOs gathered support around them through families living close to their offices. Alexandria from the Food Project (2009) emphasizes the importance of Cape Verdean families for the success of the TFP's farm and farmers' markets: "[It is very important to] use people who are of the community as ambassadors if you will to protect the land and protect the work, you know to be involved. The Cape Verdean families have been very involved." The strong ties built on each street have also facilitated the organization of clean-up and maintenance activities, as Tubal, an organizer (2009), explains: "We would organize clean-up sometimes. [...] Each street would also organize the clean-ups of each block." Each block would organize clean-up activities, and this always along with the ones organized by DSNi.

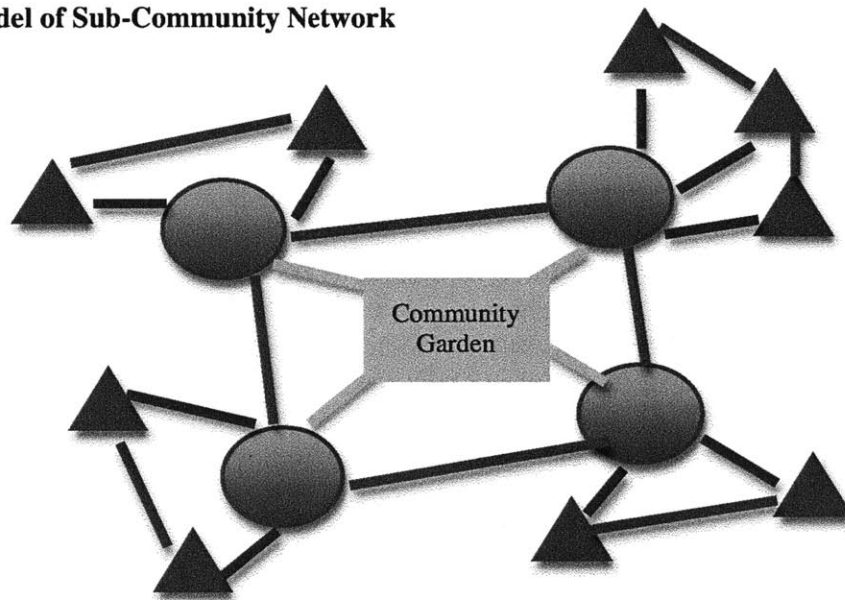
Similar connections have been helpful in regards to healthy eating and fresh food projects, such as the Haley House. Kathe Mc Kenna, its founder (2009), points out the diversity of partnerships built on close physical proximity of entities in Dudley Square:

“We have met other groups that have tied up our connection: Patrolman Baxter partnered early on with Deedee -- preparing ethnic cuisine and capturing flavors in making it healthy). We partner with Body by Brandy for Kids. She helps with obesity. We also work with Boston Day and Evening Charter Academy and take kids in a pre-professional program for culinary arts as career.”

Other community organizations have been very proactive in contacting NGOs geographically close to them, as Penn Loh from ACE (2009) explains: “DSNI was one of the first groups. They went knocking on our door and saying hey what do you guys think about this idea for an organization like ACE? [...]. Their whole Urban Village vision was a very compelling vision.” In other words, sub-community networks have contributed to the continuation of environmental projects and ensured broad support for their realization.

In short, coalitions have been crucial in consolidating and refining success in each neighborhood. Broad horizontal coalitions with a variety of stakeholders ensure that different perspectives are represented and that residents are backed up by more groups and organizations. Residents have complemented the construction of coalitions with the use of sub-community networks inside and outside the neighborhood, which have consolidated projects, provided expertise and training to leaders and participants, and relied on spatial capital. The form and diversity of coalitions and networks are displayed in Figure 13 below. Coalition and network members are flexible and diverse, and they either contribute directly to a specific project (i.e., community garden development), or provide support in a more secondary way. They become called up directly by coordinators of a project or through a relationship already existing with members of similar origins, interests, or skills.

Figure 13: A Model of Sub-Community Network



5.3 Clever engagement with officials and funders

5.3.1 Political openings and creative use of political and planning structures

During the development and refinement of their projects, activists have made creative use of existing or new political spaces and structures. Political opportunity structures traditionally refer to the context and resources that encourage or discourage collective action (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 1994). They correspond to the capacity of social movements to be dynamic and strategically respond to a political environment that is favorable to their action. Movements often mount action based on changing circumstances and following a political process perspective, assessing whether a series of factors come together in their favors, including expanding political opportunities (McAdam, 1982). Movements consider the opportunities to take action and evaluate their relation with their contenders before they make a decision (Tilly, 1978). Here groups take advantage of the political context (Gamson, 1990). At times, multilevel political opportunities exist through, for instance, local movements being helped by international civic or governmental pressures (McAdam, 1998). However, political opportunities and a favorable political context do not only exist as an external context explaining the existence of political action and the rise of social movements. In Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, local activists have strategically used political openings, favorable circumstances, and even existing political and institutional structures to achieve their community reconstruction projects.

Throughout the past decades, neighborhood residents in the Casc Antic have taken advantage of local political changes and, in other cases, absence of official state presence in the neighborhood to achieve their goals. Activists relate how squatters started occupying empty buildings around the Forat and initiated the greening of the space since it had become obvious that the city administration and city workers had left the area abandoned. There was a political opening in the neighborhood for young squatters to take action. A few decades before in the 1970s, residents also took advantage of the periods of democratic transition to become active and resist urban processes, as Hubertus Poppinhaus (2009) relates:

“Everyone got involved in the neighbor’s movement because there was not other way to act politically here. There was no other canal, you could not be affiliated to a party, because it was prohibited back then. Associations became to be legalized, I think, at the end of the 1960s, so the neighbor’s associations converted almost in clandestine parties, with strong political activity. [...] When the democracy was established, they were super powerful in that sense, because they prevented demolitions, house demolitions.”

At some point, Spain was the European country with most mobilization from neighbors’ associations, and Spanish cities continue to be vibrant places of civic activism today. Furthermore, outside supporters offering technical and legal support to the Casc Antic residents asserted their rights for a specific project (i.e. the permanent greening of the Forat) based on the content and vision of urban plans (PERIs) promulgated in Barcelona in the 1980s (Interviews with lawyer Moreno 2009 and Architect Poppinhaus).

Likewise, community leaders in Cayo Hueso made use of national favorable political circumstances and policies to further ground for their projects or gain more stable acceptance. For instance, Rosa (2009) grounded community demands for an organopónico within the government’s institutionalization of urban agriculture: “The country made a call for creating

urban agriculture. Raul Castro proposed for every neighborhood to have its organopónico.¹⁹ So we met with the urban agriculture representative.” Leaders leveraged the economic context of the island in the 1990s. Being stranded for resources and outside support, developing urban agriculture was an easy sell. Rosa together with the TTIB leaders were clever in articulating the need for an urban farm with the nutritional needs resulting from the crisis. They also benefited from new policies in Cuba such as the authorization of worked-managed agricultural cooperatives (UBPC) in 1993 and the reemergence of farmers’ markets in 1994 (Martín, 2002; Pérez Rojas & Echevarría León, 2001). Likewise, if permaculture growers in Cayo Hueso spontaneously emerged during the Special Period, their activities gained official acceptance in 1991 when the municipal Havana government officially encouraged residents to participate in food production in sites later known as patios and parcelas (Premat 1999). In regards to the creation of the TTIB workshops more generally, leaders took advantage of the support given by the government to community-based neighborhood transformation: “It was something that caught our attention – that we had been given concessions here to do a participatory urban planning” (GDIC staff member 2009). Such concessions were based on the incapacity of the Cuban institutions to respond to local concerns. Other circumstances favored international partnerships, such as the authorization granted in 1993 for Cuban organizations to receive funding from international NGOs.

In addition to taking advantage of this favorable political context, Cayo Hueso organizations and leaders have resorted to traditional structures within Cuba. They have used political or mass organizations as a tactic to receive backup for their projects as well as main d’oeuvre for physical improvements in the neighborhood. This has been the case with the microbrigades recruited during the sanitizing and remodeling of ciudatelas, such as Espada 411. This microbrigade movement involves a group of 35 to 40 workers temporarily released from their workplace and unemployed people to build housing and social projects, while keeping their salary from their place of employment. They nicely reflected the communist work spirit of Che Guevara and promoted the values of the Rectification Period – of breaking down the divides between professionals and manual workers (Eckstein, 2003).

Local organizations also made intelligent use of institutional municipal structures. This is the case of Dudley activists vis-à-vis the City of Boston. In the city, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) is supposed to be the core planning agency. That said, their staff members do not really plan neighborhood development and do not coordinate their work with the official department in charge of the issue – the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND). On the other hand, the DND does informal planning but no formalized planning effort. In that context, community groups and leaders in Dudley have been able to take advantage of this vacuum and informality by proposing and winning support for projects, especially parks, playgrounds, and community centers, and working with supportive staff in the DND (Interview with DND 2009). Except for the 1986 BRA redevelopment plan for Dudley, organizations have not had to respond to comprehensive city-led planning efforts; they have acted rather proactively. In addition to taking advantage of this institutional context, residents built upon programs and

¹⁹ In 1994, one of the most acute years of the Special Period, Raul Castro declared at the National Assembly: “Yesterday, we said that beans were as important as guns; today we are affirming that beans are more valuable than guns.” (Castro Cruz, 1994).

movements initiated by local politicians, such as the urban agriculture and farmers' markets promoted by Mel King in the 1970s (Interview with Susan Redlych 2009).

While residents maneuvered political structures and institutions in the Casc Antic, Cayo Hueso, and Dudley, activists also understood the leeway that they had vis-à-vis political figures themselves. Residents represented a potential voting block, and positive relations between residents and officials were beneficial for the officials themselves. In the Casc Antic, Joan (2009) emphasizes: "Of course, [the politicians] were interested in getting the votes." Other organizations such as the GENAB constantly reminded elected officials of their electoral promises. In Cayo Hueso, leaders made politicians realize the importance of supporting community projects, despite their initial reluctance. For instance, Jaime from the Quiero a Mi Barrio gym (2009) explains how he convinced the government to support his project as a way to avoid a massive exile of people from Cuba: "At the beginning, we had to explain. This was the Special Period. There were boats leaving the country. It was a delicate moment." The Castro regime quickly realized that promoting community projects was needed in a period of large defections from the regime's ideals (various GDIC members interviews 2009). The neighborhood was needed ("Se hacia falta el barrio"). Officials could harness political benefits from supporting community projects.

Activists in Dudley were very aware that politicians were in search of support and that residents could help them: "Politicians feel that they can benefit, and in fact do if they can help the constituency and then the constituency will help them" (Alma, Monadnock Garden Coordinator, 2009). During the Flynn administration, relations with the mayor were originally more tense since Flynn's traditional constituency was Irish South Boston. As a result, Flynn needed to demonstrate his support to residents of color in Dudley, as Tubal Padilla (2009) argues:

"Flynn became aware that someone needed to do something of great symbolic impact which would enhance the confidence that those communities had. And DSNi was helpful, and I think that our access to Ray Flynn and his disposition to act within the municipality and the municipal governmental to facilitate what we were doing and support what we were doing was nothing else than a [...] need to demonstrate to black and latino communities that someone was willing to work with us."

Residents argue that political leaders perceived an advantage in working with Dudley.

Dudley political representatives, such as former Councilor Chuck Turner (2009) also emphasize the political gains that current Mayor Menino was able to harness from his official backup of the neighborhood's environmental projects:

"As an Italian mayor, before him there were Irish leaders for eighty years. He knows that the better political relations he can have with communities of color, the stronger his political base will be. [...] It has to do with his political development: For his political future, he needs relations with communities of color."

Local activists used cleverly the rules of the political game, as revealed by Greg Watson (2009):

"Land is at a premium when you think about developers and taxes. So we were able to make an argument both on vision but also on practicality in terms of and clearly it was in the best interest of the Mayor to see those. If they could point you know in the beginning of their term the number of vacant lots in this part of the city and they

could turn around, right around re-election time and say look at the new affordable, high quality homes that were built.”

Some organizations have even modified their structure to become a stronger political force, such as ACE: The idea “behind a membership base is that we can start to exercise our voting power as well. [...]. They actually are a voting block. And that should speak louder to the elected officials than almost anything else.” ACE can thus rally its members to push for environmental demands in the city.

In order to convince political leaders of the importance of their projects, community leaders have dedicated much effort to technical tools and studies. For instance, they have prompted the participation of local kids in documentaries to defend environmental improvements in the neighborhood. In Cayo Hueso, the Casa del Niño y de la Niña did a documentary in 1998-1999 with children and sent it to the Ministry of Agriculture. In the tape, participants recorded the availability of empty lots in the neighborhood and demonstrated the need for developing local urban agriculture, as Rosa (2009) explains:

“With the kids, we did a little tour of all the empty spaces in the area. Everything that the kids proposed got done in the end. Kids talked about the space, the organopónico. We did a route and first went to a CTA in Centro Habana in Neptuno which was selling plants and seeds. We then proposed to have an organopónico with a CTA and with the little shops.”

The documentary was complemented by a study of available water resources to irrigate crops. During that time, the Cayo Hueso TTIB also collaborated on the project “Ecosystem Health” led by the INHEM (the Hygiene, Epidemiology, Microbiology National Institute) to study the health of the local ecosystem and evaluate the health and environmental benefits of the TTIB projects, which increased their legitimacy vis-à-vis city officials (Interview with Yassi and Spiegel 2009). In the Casc Antic, the leader of INCITA, a youth organization, put together a documentary, recording young residents’ ideas and visions for reconstructing the Forat into a permanent green zone in 2007, which then helped Architects without Borders design the new space and propose it to the municipality.

In short, leaders have been very savvy in understanding the political context, political structures, planning decisions, and openings they had in front of them. However, they also cleverly engaged specific key state officials and staff, who have then able to help activists in their revitalization endeavors by playing multiple roles and taking on different responsibilities.

5.3.2 Support from municipal staff and state officials

In the course of their projects, residents received support from core – open or covert – allies whose vision for the neighborhood helped residents accomplish their goals. In the Casc Antic, organizations such as AECCA have cleverly built a solid relation with technicians and mid-level managers working in the neighborhood through events in which they met. As a result, they call these employees to receive funding or technical help for their sports programs. In other cases, residents have been able to rely on public officials, whom they got to know in other neighborhood struggles and whom they have direct access to, as a staff member from the City of Barcelona and former community relations manager in the Casc Antic (2009) explains:

“In addition to giving classes in the School of Architecture, Itziar [the Casc Antic City Manager] was giving technical advice to the squatters’ movement in domains

such as architecture, she was a mediator in the conflict around Plaza Lesseps. [...] She has an architecture office, when the two architects members of the Forat squatters work, and so she advises them.”

In Havana, the construction of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña was made possible through ministerial support, which helped accelerate the process, as Rosa (2009) emphasizes: “600 kids signed the letter to the Trade Ministry. Right away, the ministry went to assess the situation and sent an engineer in 15 days,” Similarly, the creation of the urban farm involved building up targeted contacts with the Urban Agriculture Office and meeting with the appropriate staff member to negotiate the space and receive technical advice to jumpstart the project. In Boston, Operations Specialists in the Neighborhood Development Corporation helped leaders such as Brandy Crushird navigate her way through city administration, steered her through various departments, and made sure she did not get lost in the bureaucracy.

In some cases, these allies have been more covert, and used their discretionary power to support residents’ demands. For residents, building networks and trust relations with them has been crucial to the development of their projects. In Boston, Jose Barros from DSNI (2009) emphasizes the importance of these key covert allies:

“The relationship we build with each individual helps because you can pick up the phone. Because of the relationship you can get a lot of things. If you don't get it from this person you can go to the one you know and talk with them so there is a connection you have and you use it. Maybe you want someone else. [...] If you know someone else, then that person knows another person. But you've got to continue to build that relationship and respect the friendships so you can use it.”

In the Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), some staff members are fighting to guarantee as much open space as possible for Dudley, and this without stepping on too much on the functions of the City Parks and Recreation’s Department:

I try to get as much possible for open space, I am the one and only open space person here. I have been given a mission to promote as much open, useable and successful open space as possible. [...] Although we have to be careful not to step too much on the parks department's toes because we don't want to tell the parks department like look you are not doing enough in open space. We have to be sort of a little more cautious (DND Staff Member 2009).

These staff members also do have to fight internally within the DND itself against managers who are more in favor of housing development than open space preservation and expansion. In other cases, Directors of municipal Departments, such as Lisa Chapnick with the former Boston Department of Public Services, became strong spokespeople for organizations and their claims – the demand of eminent domain by DSNI – and advocated for their demands to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (Interview with Lisa Chapnick, 2009). They believed in the people on the ground, their energetic rallying capacity, their initial victories, their commitment, and also recognized that the city did not have a strong alternative plan for the neighborhood.

Activists in Cayo Hueso such as Cristián or Jaime have their allies in state companies, whom they ask favors to achieve the revitalization of abandoned areas. Several GDIC members have also been key covert allies for leaders to acquire greater legitimacy in their projects and to help them find international support, as Joel Diaz from the TTIB (2009) emphasizes: “The GDIC is the adviser of the workshop. They prepare us methodologically. We develop discussion

methods with them. We receive training courses, for instance in popular education. They look for scholarships to go to the MLK for instance.” For residents, the close relations they have been able to build with the GDIC through the years have ensured them a security in the realization of their projects. Such ties have been particularly important because of the tensions with government offices and members that have built up through the years, as a former Oxfam Program Director (2009) relates:

“It was difficult to make the government understand how it should work. They want take the resources away from the workshop. The GDIC was helpful in terms of resources and was working with foreign NGOs that were bringing materials. The problem is that the construction people from the municipality wanted the materials. There were worried about a loss of control.”

To address these threats of losing control, residents have attempted to work closely with allies in traditional Cuban organizations and structures, such as the Centro de Defensa de la Revolución (CDR), by inviting their members to events. They also go to the CDR regular gatherings and show their “active” presence. It is like a tactical exchange of favors.

Beyond the support of mid-level managers or leaders in state organizations, activists have developed long-lasting trust relations with officials with the highest authority and power. This is especially true in Boston and Havana where such ties have been more needed and desired than in Barcelona. In Dudley, community groups have reached out Mayor Menino to better advocate for their environmental and health projects and obtain more buy in, as Chuck Turner, Drew Forster from the Croc Foundation, and Jeanne Dubois from Dorchester Bay point out:

“He always was a blue collar guy who believes in neighborhoods. But we also trained him about organizing. I mean he used to come to meetings where we would have 300 or 400 church people and they are all demanding this and that. Menino is very neighborhood-based, he cares about green space and gardening.” (Dubois 2009)

In Cayo Hueso, leaders benefited from the support of Fidel Castro, as a GDIC member explains (2009): “One of the orientations that Fidel gave is that we would make contact with all the most advanced world ideas around urban development [...]” As a result, the GDIC staff organized visits of research centers in Europe, Latin America, and the US to gather ideas for the TTIB workshops in Havana.

Much of the in-depth engagement of community residents and organizations with decision-makers and political leaders in the city has taken the form of negotiation and dialogue. Such mechanisms have allowed them to understand each other’s interests, demands, and viewpoints better, and eventually reach a more lasting agreement. In the Casc Antic, residents together with the GENAB NGO have met several times with the municipality to plan for the creation of a Punto Verde recycling center, which is a demand to which decision-makers positively responded to. In other instances, youth organizations such as AECCA and Fundació Comtal have used negotiations to gain access to school sports grounds to run their basketball training and leagues. These engagement practices have been in line with municipality priorities, as Marc Aureli Santos, a city planner (2009), emphasizes:

“In the past few years, the obsession has been to recuperate the dialogue with the neighbors – the whole concept of citizens’ participation.”

That said, not everyone in the Casc Antic has used negotiations with the municipality as a tactic to achieve their goals, as Jorge from the Barcelona Federation of Neighbors’ Associations (2009), emphasizes: “Once we had obtained [that it would not been a privatized space and not a

hard plaza], we had to negotiate. And so in this project, more maximalist groups fell aside, and they still continue their fights.” In other words, divisions have been acute between squatters and older residents who entirely distrust the community engagement practices of the municipality and want to solve problems fully on their own, on the one hand, and younger residents and activists who have shown less radical and more pragmatic postures.

Some recent parks and playgrounds in Dudley were built after a constructive negotiation process between residents, community, organizations, and the municipality. This is the case of the Dennis Street park, as José Barros (2009) explains: “Years later we negotiated with them and they came back with some money they invested. So there was a meeting they decided what they want to see there. So now, it used to be different, less quality. Right now it's really first class, very nice.” The members of the broader coalitions formed around Dudley also played a role in negotiations with the city. Tunney Lee, an MIT professor involved in the early years of community planning (2009), describes his role: “I talked to City and told them what I was doing. I invited them to join (I had worked at the city before). You had to be in communication with the city, they had a crucial role. They think you are a bunch of movements. It was important to keep the community open.” In other cases, environmental NGOs such as ACE negotiated good neighbors agreements with the trash transfer stations operating in Dudley so that the violations committed by their owners could come to an end and truly improve their business practices.

Community leaders in Cayo Hueso also spent ample time negotiating their demands with state officials and departmental staff in the municipality. The space where the Casa del Niño y de la Niña was built was the result of a long negotiation process, as Arsenio Garcia (2009) describes:

“The fact is that the ministries were using the space and did not want to lose the space as part of the Ministry. However, the space was the only possibility for us. Kids need the space to develop their capacities and do physical activity. It was a long process of negotiation. The dollar and the medium levels of the Ministry did not take a decision there was no result there. We solicited the space, then there was a delay and waiting time, and then that we achieved something with a higher level in the Ministry. Then the ministry gave support to clean and paint the space to create the conditions.”

A similar long process of dialogue was initiated by the TTIB workshop to develop an urban farm in Cayo Hueso. In other cases, community leaders organized direct meetings and conflict resolution workshops with state workers in charge of waste management issues in the neighborhood – *comunales* in Spanish – to enhance their work ethics and improve their efforts in the neighborhood, which had taken a serious toll during the economic crisis.

As a result of constant efforts, residents and their supporters have managed to build relations with the municipality in which officials and staff members are more receptive to the neighbors' demands and concerns. In Barcelona, the Municipality has learned from an initial confrontational approach with the neighbors, as Carola, a community worker from the City of Barcelona (2009), explains: “The administration has also learned from its own experience [...]. With the new manager, there is much more interest in detecting and respecting the opinion of the neighbors. And pacify these processes.” Promoting dialogue and listening are now key priorities. Similar achievements have taken place in Boston, especially in regards to the relations of Dudley residents with the BRA, the Boston Public Health Commission, and the Department of Neighborhood Development (interviews with BPHA and DND, 2009).

In short, such alliances have allowed activists to increase the stability of their projects, ensure land tenure or control in crucial areas in the neighborhood, and overall gain legitimacy.

5.3.3 Successful fundraising and funding

In addition to constructive relationship building with municipal representatives, residents and their supporters have spent much efforts gathering financial support for environmental revitalization endeavors in the forms of grants, fellowships, or gifts. In fact, the formation of broad-based coalitions has helped activists demonstrate to funders that projects are well received in the community, that their execution is based on a strong grassroots or community grounding, and that diverse actors with complementary focuses and skills will facilitate the smooth and thorough implementation of the action items in the projects. This is especially the case in Dudley and Cayo Hueso where the demonstration of solid coalitions allow organizations and groups to better assert their demands for funding. In Barcelona, most nonprofits and groups depend on state funding, and private foundations have almost no place.

In Dudley, the funding oriented towards the neighborhood revitalization has been very diverse: Municipal, state, and federal funding (i.e, City of Boston CDBG program, Department of Neighborhood Development, Boston Public Health Commissions, Massachusetts Highway Department, Department of Justice, the Center for Disease Control), local foundations (i.e, Boston Foundation, Riley Foundation, Barr Foundation), national nonprofits (KabOOM!, the Salvation Army), research centers (Urban Ecology Institute), hospitals, banks (Boston Community Loan Funds), and individual donors. Community organizations have been very successful in attracting these sources of funding. DSNI and ACE worked closely with the MA Department of Environmental Protection to declare sites around Dudley as hazardous and advocated for the EPA to fund the clean up of hazardous waste sites in Dudley. Such a posture reflects the fact that nonprofit organizations do not have the funding, capacity, or authority to clean up sites, but have the technical capacity to prove the responsibility of entities such as the EPA in discriminatory environmental practices. To a similar extent, organization such as Body by Brandy gym (2009) have also been able to piece a variety of funding sources together for different components of the project:

“Through her relationship with Blue Cross Blue Shield, which had funded a fitness DVD she created, Cruthird was able to secure partnerships with the United Way, Children's Hospital of Boston and Good Sports, Inc., a regional non-profit organization that distributes sports and fitness equipment in low-income, urban areas.”

Foundations such as the Riley foundation have been crucial in the reconstruction of Dudley, and based their funding decisions on the strength of the community: “We needed to show we had a broader support and that money can make a difference. We had to show the commitment of people to make it worth to continue in this positive direction” (Riley trustee, 2009). For Riley, the assets of the community were its people, their commitment, and constant motivation.

In Cayo Hueso, community activists have also been able to assemble a diversity of – often unexpected and original – funding sources. Funders have not always been as reliable through time as the funders in Boston, but have proven to be crucial for the development of revitalization projects. They have included NGOs such as Oxfam Canada and Save the Children, UNICEF, cities in Spain, students and researchers from Europe and the United States, athletes

from Latin America, municipal and provincial government agencies, and local residents. For instance, Save The Children has recently opened new lines of budget to improve the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, repair schools and their playgrounds, and build new gyms and sports centers in the neighborhood (Save the Children interview, 2009). Joel from the TTIB (2009) emphasizes the diversity of funders assembled for the environmental projects in Cayo Hueso: “We also fixed up parks through getting dollars. We reforested, planted trees in the Quintin Bandera and the Martires parks. That was through the help of a European NGO which gave us dollars and also from the Provincial Government. This is how we maintain ourselves: with resources and with collaboration from the outside. The house from Jaime was done with a municipality from Spain.” Without such comprehensive forms of resources, projects could not have taken place.

Over time, fundraising success demonstrates to residents and community supporters that the neighborhood is making positive strides for the future and that environmental revitalization efforts are worth it. In Dudley, Tubal Padilla (2009) relates the critical impact of the Riley Foundation’s funding on the residents:

“This was very important: the fact that people would see that this time they had an opportunity to change things, because people, in all the attempts that they had done before here or somewhere else, they never had an institution with this power and with this name and this relevance, telling them ‘You are not doing well and we are here with you.’ And that would make resources accessible that the community would never have been able to have.”

These funds were a weapon and a tool for the community to move forward. Financial resources helped at the planning stage, at the training and workforce development stage, provided resources to build materials and hire workers, helped conduct community outreach, and ensured the appropriate sustainability of the projects over time. For foundations, the financial support was a reflection of the their mission as well as the realization that it was a unique chance to contribute to a holistic community-based endeavor. For others, such as the Riley Foundation, it was closer to what they call “venture capital. -- You throw your dollars there and hope it works” (2009). Foundations were also critical in rallying other organizations around them. In Dudley, the Riley Foundation convinced the Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation to increase the amount of their investment into Dudley. These funding sources provide not only means to achieve concrete results in Dudley, but also helped build solid partnerships for years.

5.4 Community identity and place attachment

The struggles of residents for environmental revitalization in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana have demonstrated that they use their endeavors to re-build a broken community and to strengthen people’s attachment, identity, and rootedness in the neighborhood. However, identity and place attachment are not only end goals in the residents’ minds. In turn, community members can use place attachment as a strategy to develop their environmental and health projects, rebuild their neighborhood, counter threats of placelessness and encroachment, and gather residents around them. Community identity can be used and manipulated as an active political strategy by coalitions who mobilize residents to contest urban policies. It is deployed strategically as a form of collective action to empower neighborhoods (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002). It is an underlying reinforcing tactic for neighborhood transformation developed by local residents and community organizations.

5.4.1 Strengthening of local identity and attachment

The success of environmental revitalization projects is strongly related to the capacity of local leaders and community workers to gather broad support in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic. In order to attract volunteers and strengthen their participation, project leaders have used the personal and collective identity of residents to motivate them. This is particularly true in Dudley and Cayo Hueso where the participation of residents in the environmental and health projects was not guaranteed due to the extensive abandonment and dangerousness of the place (in Dudley) and due to a difficult socio-economic crisis and depression (in Cayo Hueso). In Barcelona and in recent years, the new leaders of the community gardens in the Pou de la Figuera have put emphasis on bringing kids' cultural roots and traditions into the project. For instance, Maria makes sure that she incorporates plants from Africa and gardening practices from the Caribbean into the garden. To attract and integrate newcomers, garden volunteers narrate the history of the neighborhood fights and emphasize the courage that residents have demonstrated to counter urban development plans. Photos of the fights are also hung around the fence of the garden. In other instances, organizers also encourage kids to draw the history of the Forat: "We do awareness because there are people who do not know much about the area. We call after school organizations and kids did drawings" (María 2009). In that sense, local activists use the history of the neighborhood and develop narratives around it to bound people together and create a greater sense of rootedness, which is then meant to encourage residents to work in the garden or take part in other environmental projects.

Community organizations such as DSNI in Dudley spend ample attention narrating stories of the neighborhood ashes, degradation, and abandonment to residents to remind them of the importance of fighting together and sustain recent achievements. Memory construction is an important rallying tactic, as Trish Settles (2009) emphasizes:

"So being able to link all those different pieces of community, draw from those connections not only for themselves but also for the funders and say 'hey look we need the resources,' but for the residents in the neighborhood. If the residents have a common understanding of the kind of the issues that are out there, well yes we do need housing, yes we do need to protect our open spaces, yes we do have a soil contamination problem but we can address these if we all work together."

In order to enhance the participation of residents, community groups organize events every year meant to remind people of the fights and accomplishments through the years. One of them, called the Walk for Dudley, is a 2.5 mile walk organized in October that celebrates the Dudley Street community-based organizations who have been working to shape the Dudley neighborhood into a vibrant urban village. Throughout the walk, organizers bring walkers through projects such as the Croc community center, the Food Project farm, the community pool, or newly renovated parks. As Mel King (2009) explains, "that march is a way of involving people, strengthening and carving out in ways of making some demands on each other." It helps bring people together around Dudley and show a broad-based and well-rooted movement.

Building a strong sense of place is a process that took some time and efforts, but it seemed essential to bringing different ethnic groups together around projects that promoted new collective goods. Local leaders and community groups thus dedicated much attention to building a stronger identity, as Tubal Padilla, an early environmental activist (2009), explains:

“If people do not have a strong sense of belonging, if people are not identified with their immediate communities, well, they will not participate. [...] To identify this place as the Dudley Street neighborhood is something that many people were not doing before. But it was a transformation of identification of the ethnic groups who shared a territory. So on the one side there were the common enemies, and, on the other hand, a common project which took much time to develop and to recruit the vast majority of people.”

Unifying people around the idea of a “community beyond each ethnic group” was a challenge, but it eventually allowed activists have a broader support base.

Throughout the course of environmental projects, Dudley activists intervened in community meetings and pointed at the identity of Dudley as a reason for further action. Identity was a tool to justify community gardens, farms, or parks. For instance, some residents such as Powan Burgess gave a presentation at a DSNI meeting about the importance to revive the identity of residents as closely coupled to traditional farming practices and to former natural elements in Dudley. Local leaders attempted to bring back some of the native, as Greg Watson (2009), who facilitated the meeting at that time, emphasizes: “We felt that there were cultural aspects of a multi-cultural neighborhood that could be used to create the sense of place that would have low environmental impact [...] How do we take, and if you really just step back a little bit and look at the landscape of Roxbury. [...]” Identifying and emphasizing the linkages between residents and natural elements around them has turned out to be important tactics to justify the push for certain types of projects in the neighborhood and make them happen. Creating an urban village has not only been an end goal but a strategy to bring residents together – a way to help solidify the sense of place as a multi-cultural, sustainable, vibrant tight community in the middle of Boston.

Some organizations in Dudley directly aim at reinforcing the identity of residents and strengthening their sense of pride and belonging in the city. Discover Roxbury, which offers tours of the neighborhood led by Byron Rushing, an expert in Roxbury’s history, plays such a role:

“People did not know the history of their Community. It was left out in schools. Find out that this community was interesting in the History of Boston. We wanted them to learn about the history of their community. [...] We did a garden tour, like hidden treasures. We work with many organizations now and we want to be connected to other organizations to be more powerful in presenting our message” (Discover Roxbury Director, 2009).

Tour participants get to learn the historic traits of their neighborhoods, its landmarks, its beautiful spots and landscapes, which then reinforces their sense of pride and desire to be part of its improvements. Furthermore, the Haley House organizes weekly events around art, history, and culture at the Haley House such as Art is Life Itself, which are meant to attract residents into coming back and buying products from the bakery and café. With the help of local artists, historians, and community leaders, the art series celebrates the neighborhood, and also helps harness more interest in healthy food.

The creation of the TTIB projects in Cayo Hueso has been essentially oriented around the neighborhood identity. Project leaders, such as Joel and Maria del Carmen, focus much of their organizing work around the identity and history of Cayo Hueso, in an attempt to consolidate the

attachment people show towards their neighborhood and later their participation in TTIB activities. Joel (2009) emphasizes how essential it is for residents to learn more about their place:

“Cayo Hueso has such a long cultural and patriotic history. We are constantly remembering it here in the TTIB: it is important that the residents know their history and that they love their neighborhood, and that they feel the neighborhood. It is important to develop the feeling of belonging and the sense of taking better care of the neighborhood and social relations.”

In his words, stronger feelings of belonging will trigger community actions for improving neighborhood conditions, which explains why these feelings need to be cultivated. Further, in their attempt to convince decision-makers to renovate parks and improve the safety of their equipments, TTIB leaders have used the role of the neighborhood in the history of Cuba as a justification for improvements, as Joel (2009) explains: “In the Maceo Park, the kids playground got fixed. We talked with Eusebio Leal – that Maceo was a leader of Cuba’s national history. So he agreed to give support and also send a brigade from Habana Vieja. The neighborhood did not want to close the park.” Discussions with Leal, the official Historian of the City, were accompanied by letters by Rosa and her kids describing the importance of saving the park for the patrimony of the city, in addition to pointing out the need for kids to have a place to play.

In the activities that Cayo Hueso leaders organize to bring their project forward and attract volunteers, they put much emphasis on strengthening the relation between residents and building their collective identity. A greater identity should lead to a greater participation. To achieve this goal, activists such as Rosa (2009) has been leading history workshops for kids in the Casa:

“I have lived in Centro Habana since I was young. I have been living in this block for 40 years. I have a strong sense of belonging. I give workshops on the history of the neighborhood so that they love their neighborhood, because it is important to take care of the neighborhood. I explain to them the context, the history. So that makes them feel more committed, and they have a better behavior, and they take better care of the environment.”

Rosa also created a competition called “Mi Barrio” (My Neighborhood) so that kids would talk about their neighborhood, explain what they like and would like to protect in it, and draw parts of it. For her brigades “Por un Barrio más Limpio” (For a Cleaner Neighborhood), she gives identity cards which Pablo designs to the kids who participate in the brigade so that they feel prouder of their accomplishments. In addition, she and Joel organize commemorations for the TTIB anniversaries and the creation of the Casa del Niño y de la Niña, which are meant to consolidate the ties between residents and those institutions and remind them of the accomplishments achieved in Cayo Hueso through the years.

Another illustration of community identity and attachment used as strategy is the work of the Martin Luther King Center when it led the reconstruction of the ciudadela Espada 411 in Cayo Hueso. Felix, the MLK representative for the project (2009), explains that the MLK worked to “use values and rehabilitate the units and work with the subjectivity of the people, that is feeling of belonging, self-help, and solidarity.” As residents had to participate actively in the design and planning of the construction, the MLK together with the TTIB, mobilized community attachment as a tool to motivate residents to become as involved as possible in the project.

5.4.2 Use of community traditions and traits

As community organizations and residents resort to place attachment and community identity as strategies to bring residents around environmental and health projects, they also rally them around community traditions. In Casc Antic, Dudley, and Havana, active leaders and community organizers organize social and cultural manifestations meant to strengthen people's bonds with one another, assemble a large number of residents around festive and convivial events, and then to use them as occasions for discussing demands and framing new endeavors. In other words, street parties or festivals are a stepping stone to rally more supporters.

Much of the Forat reconstruction with green spaces started with festive events that brought residents together outside their homes. Street events are in fact a common cultural manifestation in Barcelona. Over time, the work in the Forat was made possible because community residents organized paella parties and brought musicians and clowns to entertain residents while they were working in the gardens, for instance. Paco, an active participant in the Forat (2009), explains how convivial gatherings were a base for community work: "We would meet here 200 people, and spend a day all together eating, doing a paella, and so, well, cover these necessities so that the work day would not really be work, work. But also festive. In other words, so that people would have a good time while they were doing the work." Monica, a squatter in the neighborhood (2009), summarizes these activities: "Neighbors started to create spaces where they could be together, and from there, you see each other often, and you start saying 'let's do this or this.'" Through these activities, people became more relaxed, relations between participants (often from different ethnic and cultural groups) improved, and participants learned to work well together. These community work days were very dynamic events in the Casc Antic. Community leaders also point out that those manifestations were the occasion for diffusing messages about municipal plans for the neighborhood and rallying people around defending the space against those plans. Over time, residents – and especially youth – were meant to build a stronger connection to the neighborhood as well as develop greater leadership.

Not only did the residents' fights around the Forat present occasions for using community traditions. The work around the community gardens built after 2007 has also been based on residents' cultural festivities. For instance, garden leaders regularly call upon their contacts to prepare couscous or other meals for celebratory parties organized in the garden. Such events are meant to attract new neighbors into participating in the garden, but also to encourage them to show respect for the new space and to demonstrate that the gardens are for everyone. Parties provide occasions for neighbors from all origins to get to know each other, and eventually create stronger bonds rally around common projects. Similarly, the Pacto por Residuos (Waste Pact) created by the GENAB to improve waste management in the Casc Antic took root through shows and street events aimed at catching residents' attention, as Albert (2009) explains: "For two or three years in a row, we did an event called 'To do Saturday,' which meant to clean up. We would go on the streets on Sunday with street bands, giants, devils, drums." During those events, the GENAB would talk about their work and the environmental needs in the neighborhood.

Community activists have concentrated much of their efforts on organizing multicultural festivals and manifestations to showcase the community and rally residents around neighborhood projects. Often taking place in the summer, these festivals are an occasion for people to meet and build connections in a celebratory and friendly atmosphere. For instance, in Dudley DSNi

organizes every August a Multicultural Festival in the Mary Hannon Park to reinforce residents' cultural identity, emphasize the importance of diversity, and strengthen bonds between them. The event includes an array of activities based on arts and crafts, stage performances, a youth fashion show, as well as recreation and sports activities together with food and crafts representing the variety of cultural groups in Dudley. The festival is an opportunity for everyone in the neighborhood to become involved. Furthermore, community organizers plan festivities which include cookouts and music's during neighborhood cleanups to motivate residents. Similar events are organized in community gardens to bring gardeners together, celebrate accomplishments during the year, and create a tighter community.

Some organizations in Dudley have made conscious decisions to take some of their organizing activities to the outdoors to increase their visibility, gather residents' concerns, and possibly increase the number of members. This is the case of ACE, the environmental justice NGO in the Dudley, which convenes the event "EJ in the Hood" every year in the middle of Dudley Square as an outdoor festival. Penn Loh (2009) emphasizes the importance of having EJ in the Hood outdoors in Dudley Square to better integrate ACE in Dudley: "And we want to have the visibility, we want people to come to be exposed to and be able to help define various issues that we are working on. And to let people know that ACE is here and that all these different things are being worked on." For a member-based NGO such as ACE, it seemed essential for its staff to build a strong presence in the neighborhood and show that it is accessible and active.

Last, community organizers have used murals to strengthen neighborhood ties. Murals are a traditional expression of street art and cultural endeavors in communities of color. Dudley, as many others, hosts a variety of murals on different streets, the latest one being on East Cottage street, as Travis Watson from DSNI (2009) describes:

"One example is a mural that was recently done by a youth group this past summer that was housed here at DSNI. It's on East Cottage Street and it kind of shows the history, briefly of the community, of DSNI, of the Roxbury Dorchester Uphams Corner community. So there is always a reminder every where you go 'oh, yeah it's still alive,' that sense of community."

Murals remind residents of the struggles of the community, its accomplishments, and its vision. They are part of the local history and its evolution, as they capture the community actions through time.

In Cayo Hueso, resorting to cultural traditions and traits has also been a common tactic used by community leaders -- but with a different perspective from activists in Boston and Barcelona. In Cuba, the place of culture, art, and music is so impregnated in daily life and activities of every Cuban that it has traditionally been seen as a safe manifestation by the Cuban regime. Salvador from the Callejón de Hamel (2009) emphasizes that his project was allowed to move forward mostly likely because it was tied to culture and art: "The most important is that I was providing a recreation from the artistic point of view of a entire phenomenon of cultural identity. It is a contemporary creation, but with a deeply rooted and strong social tradition. I think that this is what helped me." Furthermore, the rumba events organized on Sundays are the occasion to provide direct contact between Cubans and foreigners and eventually receive outside donations.

Gathering around cultural events is also a natural way for Cuban people to come together. They do not need to be forced or convince to participate in a street party or festival. Such events help them escape daily hardships. Several TTIB leaders regularly organize street events in which residents take part. They organize celebrations based on Cuban dances, music, and poetry to promote the Casa del Niño y de la Niña. Rosa and her colleagues put together fiestas around potable water to increase the awareness of residents around the importance of using only clean and potable water and minimizing wasteful practices. A GDIC staff member (2009) explains how important cultural traditions and events were in attracting residents around the TTIB projects:

“It was the easiest to come in and do work in the community: both to use culture and identity. You are not imposing anything to the people if you organize a football team. [...] You create a canal of communication and trust. You create a gathering of people, for instance in sports activities. From there you can talk about health, environment, and education. [...] Plus, you can’t do community development without establishing a relation with community leaders.”

In that sense, the workshop based its initiatives on events that community members could easily rally around and identify with.

As the TTIBs remodeled ciudadelas, an artist and community leader called Eladio played a crucial role in energizing residents and motivating them to become more active. His widow, Modesta (2009), emphasizes the charisma and leadership capacity that Eladio demonstrated during the rehabilitation of buildings, as well as the “use” that was made of his talent by local organizations and funders. Eladio’s role was mostly centered around organizing “peñas” in the ciudadelas:

“In 1997 was the transformation of Oxfam. Eladio was dedicated to promoting Cayo Hueso. He was doing peñas, which were a characteristic of Cayo Hueso. This was motivated by the living conditions in the solares. During peñas, people meet and do parties. People sing, dance, and play the Rumba. It is as if it is a family meeting. People share. He was uniting people with the goal for the neighbors communicate more and relate themselves more with each other. [...] When Oxfam arrived here and saw that this person was sharing culture, they got the idea that he could help the transformation of the solares. Then they started the changes in 411. [...] This man was able to inter-relate and inter-connect the chain of identity in Cayo Hueso. This man was a cultural promotor, a man who would study culture.”

In other words, Eladio evolved from being an artist and enthusiast leader to playing a crucial tool in community projects which required the active participation and commitment of residents.

5.5 Discussion

In Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, residents and their supporters have cleverly developed and used a variety of strategies and tactics to achieve the environmental revitalization of their neighborhoods. Their strategies have been multi-faceted, flexible, and multi-tiered. These malleable repertoires of strategies and tactics thus reveal different layers of activism in each neighborhood in which coalition building, as considered a traditional core component of building political power for social movements (Polletta, 2005; Tarrow, 1994), does not fully account for an understanding community mobilization over time: An activism by street and more

spontaneously-organizing residents and an activism by formal organizations and institutions and. These two forms of activism coincide at times and ran parallel at others. Activists alternated between strategies and tactics because goals, targets, and issues fluctuate and evolve over the course of project creation, development, and strengthening, and depending on the relation with decision-makers and planners. Residents had to display a capacity to remain adaptive and creative.

In an initial stage, activists selected bricolage techniques (Levi-Strauss 1962) together with resourcefulness. Bricolage consisted in stitching objects, materials, and labor forces together to jumpstart project and achieve quick initial wins. Every project participant brought a little bit of resources and help to build a community garden, construct a small park, or clean-up a vacant lot. Furthermore, resourcefulness compensated for the initial lack of large material resources (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Ganz, 2000; Tarrow, 1994). Resourcefulness took a quite innovative form as leaders resorted to culturally and context appropriate modes of diffusion, broad range of volunteers whom they effectively organized (including youth and their family) and reputation and fame as tools to facilitate the early implementation of their projects and gather support around them. As residents initially creatively stitched together non-material resources around their endeavors, they also, at times, used contestation, protests, and space occupation to manifest their opposition to practices and projects affecting their neighborhood.

In a consolidation and strategic refinement stage, activists assembled broad, flexible, and versatile coalitions together, which at time included unexpected members joining environmental and health projects in a desire to contribute to broader community reconstruction, strengthen residents' identity, and combat development processes in the city. Sub-community networks – either small groups within or outside the neighborhood or technical expert communities – also turned out to be crucial support for neighborhood residents and community leaders, as they offered technical and legal assistance and their own perspectives for projects to gain greater legitimacy and sustainability over time. Here, coalition and network members displayed similar interests in neighborhood reconstruction and community autonomy, and often, common values of solidarity, altruism, sharing, and defense of powerless residents. At times, however, their values and beliefs were different, based on dissimilar traditions of activism and approaches to revitalization, especially in Barcelona and Boston. Activists also built on spatial capital resources and used an important fabric of informal actors (i.e., relatives, friends, institutions of close physical proximity), as well as common street life to strengthen their projects. Spatial processes in each neighborhood thus impacted positively residents' endeavors and allowed activists to diversify their repertoires of action and gain political power in the city.

The creation and use of coalitions and sub-community networks has been accompanied by the clever use of political opportunity structures and political contexts, but also political traditions in each city. If successful social movements have been shown to dynamically and strategically respond to a favorable political environment (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, Tarrow 1994, McAdam 1982, Gamson 1990), activists in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley have also creatively used existing political traditions and structures in the city. They also made open and covert alliances with state officials and staff members, despite the existence, especially in Dudley and Cayo Hueso, of activists who remained on the side during this consolidation phase, and were opposed to dialogue and negotiation with the municipality. Eventually, residents and their supporters were able to attract stable funding sources around their endeavors by proving

their commitment to their neighborhood as well as their political savviness. They were able to navigate very well the convoluted layers of municipal and at times national structures and contexts, and this, thanks to the variety of coalition and network members around them.

Social movements have been shown to deploy community identity as a form of collective action to empower neighborhoods and resist specific threats to a neighborhood well-being (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002). However, the accounts of residents in Boston, Havana, and Barcelona reveal that small neighborhood organizations and community leaders have also used local individual and collective identity and place attachment as an underlying and reinforcing tactical tool to rally more supporters around proactive environmental and health endeavors. They have worked to strengthen this identity over time through public events or workshops meant at developing narratives about the place and reminding participants of the struggles and accomplishment of the neighborhood over time. They have also used cultural and festive traditions part of the neighborhood life to bring residents together and encourage their participation in community gardens, neighborhood cleanups and maintenance, or planning of new sports grounds and parks. In return, residents' sense of community and place has been reshaped and reconstructed through local mobilization and interactions with decision-makers and planners. They feel a tighter connection to the place and a stronger desire to protect it. Residents also re-negotiate meanings and images associated with their urban space and local identity. Community identity functions as a feedback loop.

The activists' stories in Casc Antic, Cayo Hueso, and Dudley allow us to develop a new interpretation of cycles of protests. Tarrow (1994) argues that cycles of protests occur when the resources for collective action become available to ordinary people, enabling movements to spread to entire societies. In this present study, protests and contestation possibly occur in alternating cycles with community reconstruction and later deliberation and act as a catalyst for improved dialogue. When the structures and content of dialogue and community-officials relations do not work according to the activists' plans and visions, residents will likely mobilize to contest them and they will also take autonomous action. Alternate cycles of contestation, community reconstruction, and negotiation occur in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Havana, with different actors and levels of engagement at times, depending on each actor's preferences and values and on differing local circumstances. Some actors are more maximalist and refuse dialogue with municipal decision-makers, but some of their allies show a difference posture and take part in dialogue spaces, which then moves environmental revitalization forward – until a next stage in which contestation and protest might be needed again.

In sum, Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso have in common similar patterns of strategies and tactics despite the presence of different contexts or urbanization and political systems. In other words, living in democratic or authoritarian contexts and in a developed or less developed city does not profoundly affect repertoire development. Commonalities seem to indicate that experiences of marginalization, abandonment, exasperation, and community attachment are closely associated with certain strategic and tactical choices. Rather than core differences among neighborhood strategies and tactics, it seems more relevant to speak in terms of idiosyncratic adaptation of strategies and tactics to each city.

Nuances between cities are present in the open and transparent level of resource seeking and sharing (from less in Havana, to medium in Boston, and to high in Barcelona), in the length

and strength of the contestation cycle (from less in Havana, to medium in Boston, and high in Barcelona), and in the use of community identity itself (around artistic manifestations in Havana, festivities and street parties in Barcelona, to cultural and historic events in Boston). For instance, in an autocratic and centralized regime like Cuba, intense and open protests are not possible. However, a more clever type of contestation such as open complain letters written by kids, signed anonymously by a wide variety of residents, and sent by a community leader with strong ties to important political officials has more chances of being welcomed positively. These nuances reflect the political systems as well as histories of each city.

6 Conclusion

This research is centered on active residents, leaders, community workers and their supporters in three emblematic and marginalized urban neighborhoods across political systems and contexts of urbanization: Dudley (Boston), Casc Antic (Barcelona), and Cayo Hueso (Cuba). In each neighborhood, activists have organized to proactively enhance environmental quality and livability and – surprisingly – have not moved out of their neighborhood, and this despite the fact that, according to their testimonies, they could have moved. They have developed successful projects, including urban farms, community gardens, farmers' markets, parks, playgrounds, sports centers, and waste management initiatives. They have defied the odds that they might not be able to sustainably and consistently rebuild a broken and neglected community and gather support and confidence beyond the neighborhood space and actors, from NGOs, funders, planners, and municipal officials. They were initially able to jumpstart projects thanks to creative collage techniques and broad, and often built unexpected coalitions and sub-community networks. Thanks to their efforts and the ones of their allies, they have addressed negative stigmas and images about the neighborhood and brought pride and hope back to residents.

This observation raises a very simple question: How can similar patterns of mobilization be explained across cities and contexts that do not resemble each other at all at first glance? Based on neighborhood changes over time and through an in-depth empirical and qualitative study of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, I have sought to understand three broad dynamics: In what ways do residents and organizations engaged in environmental quality initiatives perceive that their work allowed them to re-build their community from within? To what extent do the environmental struggles of marginalized communities represent a desire to achieve environmental gains as opposed to serving as a means to advance broader political agendas in the city? How do different political systems and contexts of urbanization shape the strategies and tactics that neighborhoods develop, and how do they manage to advance their goals? This study is based on intensive fieldwork in each neighborhood and on 148 semi structured and informal interviews, observations, participant observation, and secondary data collection. My analysis consisted in extensive and methodical grounded theory, process tracing, and historical and analytic narratives in order to present how activists and their supporters understood and interpreted their work and managed to implement projects over time.

This manuscript has been structured around four parts: I first presented the historical processes of abandonment, exclusion, and laissez-faire policies of violence, decay, and dumping in distressed neighborhoods of Boston, Barcelona, and Havana. Despite living with substandard housing and sanitation systems, poor waste management, lack of healthy and affordable food options, and substandard green spaces and recreational opportunities, residents have taken action and worked on a variety of environmental and health initiatives. In the next chapter, I examined how a holistic environmental revitalization work has allowed activists to rebuild a traumatized place into safe havens and an urban village. I then turned to the analysis of broader political goals advanced by residents and their supporters as they engage in environmental revitalization work. They frame agendas around land control, border construction and protection, and notions of spontaneous participation and deepening of democracy. I finished with an analysis of the multi-tiered and multi-faceted strategies and tactics that residents, community organizations, and local NGOs have developed to advance their goals.

6.1 Case comparison

6.1.1 (Re)building a broken community and strengthening local identity

In Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, the bottom line of community organization is that residents are moved by an emotional connection, a sense of place, and an attachment to their neighborhood. Such ties prompt them to feel responsible for the well-being of their community and to feel a sense of personal growth when they are able to help other residents out. If neighborhoods are imbued with decay and abandonment, they are thus also filled with hopes and motivations to move forward. Contrary to recent justifications for public policies, media reports, or common wisdom, residents of distressed urban neighborhoods do not have a weak sense of local identity, do not want to move out to wealthier suburbs with better conditions, and do not feel disengaged from the dynamics of their locale. People are concerned that their place is losing its identity and that the social fabric is being dismantled, and they want to remediate this loss and transform the neighborhood from within.

Community connections, place attachment, and emotions in fact lead residents and their supporters to become active in local environmental projects such as clean-ups, park construction, or garden and farm maintenance, among others. Activists have prioritized comprehensive health projects with a strong focus on nutrition, youth access to outdoor parks, recreational facilities, community centers, and a healthy and affordable habitat. At the same time as residents rebuild community spaces, they re-make a place for marginalized residents in the city, address fear of erasure, grief and loss, create a sense of rootedness, and build safe havens. Their projects are a direct response to years of direct or indirect destruction, to what they perceive as urban war, and to environmental violence and trauma. Through safe havens, residents can find the psychological support they need to rebuild themselves and move forward. In places such as the Body by Brandy gym in Boston or the community gyms advocated for by Project Right in Boston, kids exercise while learning to enhance their self-esteem and draw positive goals for their future.

Activists in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic also fight for building an urban village, which is defined by a tight social fabric, self-sustainability, traditional farming and recreational practices for migrants, as well opportunities for socializing, protection, and transmission of customs and knowledge. Much emphasis is also put on celebrating the community with all its diversity, history, and practices. Parks or community gardens are places where traditions such as farming, community work, or street celebrations get revived, strengthened, and taught to other generations. The three neighborhoods are not deprived of internal tensions or conflicts between individual residents, cultural and ethnic groups, and even youth clans. In an attempt to enhance the social coexistence between people, activists have used their environmental projects to appease tensions, address pre-conceived opinions, and promote co-learning and sharing. Environmental endeavors are thus oriented towards the inside of the neighborhood and towards re-making a *Gemeinschaft* where residents are bound by cultural ties and values, where they collaborate in harmony, and where they can show altruism. In other words, marginalized neighborhoods use environmental improvements to achieve social objectives within their place, which eventually feed back into identity strengthening and stronger pride and place attachment. As illustrated by community organization in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana, place-remaking is thus a very dynamic and dialectic relation.

Revitalization projects develop in the context of a common environmental justice and community development agenda. Environment justice becomes intertwined with community development and it is important, in the minds of residents, that they do not become separated. In that sense, enhancing the environmental quality of distressed neighborhood is only the tip of an iceberg. Activists are not only developing environmental quality and livability projects because they are “green.” Community development becomes a means to advance environmental justice. In turn, urban environmental justice can not be envisioned without equitable and sustainable community development, in the form, for instance, of multi-purpose community centers, healthy and green housing, welcoming venues for healthy food and community activities, as well as economic opportunities and jobs based on these projects.

In short, place attachment and sense of community are not only motivators for local action, but environmental actions, in turn, serve as means to achieve goals related to place attachment and helping the neighborhood flourish from within.

6.1.2 Defying stigmas, controlling land and borders, and deepening democracy

As residents in the Casc Antic, Cayo Hueso, and Dudley realized the decay and losses in their neighborhood and decided to mobilize their forces to revitalize it holistically, they did not only frame their work inside the community – apart from the city around them. Their mobilization took place in a context of political and socio-economic developments and forces, which have affected their neighborhood stability, dynamics, and cohesion. More than representing a background for their struggles, these developments and pressures have been clear targets around which activists frame political goals. Residents perceive that they must confront specific urban socio-economic and political dynamics to ultimately address environmental and health injustices and allow residents to remain in their neighborhood.

Activists attempt to challenge the imaginary of public officials, planners, and media, which control the developments and visions to be prioritized in each neighborhood and what “place” it must have in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana. Community gardens, parks, or playgrounds are a mechanism to resist urban developments such as encroachment, gentrification, and tourism and assert a right for residents to their neighborhood in the city. Activists also fight existing stigmas and stereotypes about low-income and minority residents – that they do not care about the long-term environmental quality of their neighborhood and about their health and that their practices are not socially acceptable (in Cuba). For activists in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic, fighting these negative stereotypes involves giving back a sense of dignity to the residents, making them believe that they have a legitimate place in the city, and addressing environmental privileges that other neighborhoods or suburbs have. Many community leaders and neighborhood organizations have rallied forces to address abuses from municipal decision-makers and developers and eradicate situations of extreme precariousness and vulnerability, such as mobbing and expulsions in Barcelona. That said, to sustain their environmental initiatives over time, activists still need to draw support from outside sources: They are thus managing a delicate balance between the rejection of outsiders and a call for support.

Resisting external pressure and developments does not go without controlling the neighborhood’s land and territory and achieving some sort of neighborhood sovereignty on it.

Residents point at the strong connection they have built to the land and its uses, and want to ensure that parks, gardens, or recreational areas do not get taken away from them and transformed into private developments such as pricey condos, restaurants, etc. Such transformation would push families and kids out of the neighborhood. They thus aim at gaining secure tenure over the land and at increasing the stewardship of residents towards the new land uses they have promoted. This stewardship takes the form of community policing over farms and gardens, communal work, and park and playground maintenance, among others. Increased stewardship is a guarantee that residents will feel a stronger sense of ownership over the land in the long term and protect it. Guaranteeing land control has also meant that activists have set up and controlled clear physical, social, symbolic, and cultural borders that delimit the neighborhood territory, which in turn prevent a dominant society to impose its ways of life, policies, and projects upon it. For instance, parks, gardens, and green spaces such as the Jardin de la Amistad in Dudley, the Forat green spaces in the Casc Antic, and the Callejón de Hamel in Cayo Hueso are themselves physical borders which clearly delimit the neighborhood and its members.

Last, and from a process standpoint, environmental endeavors are a mechanism to build a different type of local democracy and planning practice in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, and in the city more generally. Building the type of neighborhood that community members envision can not take place without a deeper questioning towards ‘who makes decisions in the neighborhood’, ‘for whom’, and ‘with which benefits’. Activists challenge broader political arrangements in the city as well as existing democratic planning and participation practices. In fact, in all three neighborhoods, municipal decision-makers and planners had originally imposed their order on in every piece of land in the neighborhood and left the spontaneity of residents behind. As a counterpoint, residents are offering a space for debate, which did not use to exist in the city. As they fight against outside influences and develop environmental and health initiatives, they create self-managed spaces and new models for democratic planning and participation while transgressing existing norms and even, at times, defending anarchical forms of participation (especially in Barcelona). They aim at promoting a direct form of democracy rather than a deliberative democracy, which does not lead, according to them, to meaningful community participation, and which is bound by power imbalances. In turn, building a new type of democracy and planning practice creates a sense of purpose for residents, increases their commitment to the community, and also help attract greater attention to the neighborhood.

6.1.3 Stitching resources, building clever alliances, and using identity

Understanding the story of neighborhood revitalization calls for the analysis of one last aspect: To understand how have residents in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso managed to accomplish their goals successfully and what strategies and tactics have they selected to advance their vision for the neighborhood. Residents are not passive victims of degradation and abandonment but also act purposefully to address perceived or real injustices.

Four common patterns of strategies and tactic can be identified in the three neighborhoods. First, activists initially resorted to “bricolage” and “collage” techniques – stitching pre-existing elements around them together – as they sought for and shared basic resources to fight against environmental degradation and implement early revitalization projects. Bricolage consisted in piecing objects, seeds and plants, and labor forces together to initiate

showcase projects and achieve “quick wins.” Participants volunteered to bring some of their own resources for the development of a project, such as the creation of a community garden, the construction of a park, or the clean-up a vacant lot. They displayed great resourcefulness and resorted to creative non-material resources such as the far-reaching reputation of some community leaders (i.e, Rosa or Joel in Cayo Hueso) or “the voice of the latino” (the capacity of Latin American residents to easily and informally rally troops of supporters around them). Such culturally-relevant resourcefulness helped activists compensate for a lack of initial financial resources and convince others that a positive neighborhood transformation led by residents was possible. They also alternated positive engagement in concrete environmental projects with different levels of contestation and protest.

In a consolidation and strategic refinement stage, activists created broad, flexible, and versatile coalitions. At times, these coalitions included unexpected members such as artists, movie directors, or intellectuals who had the desire to contribute to broader community reconstruction, strengthen residents’ identity, and fight against development processes in the city. Sub-community networks – either small groups within or outside the neighborhood or technical expert communities – also turned out to be important support for residents, as their technical and legal expertise allowed environmental projects to gain greater legitimacy and sustainability over time. Activists also built on spatial capital resources and used a broad fabric of informal actors (i.e., relatives, friends, institutions within a close geographic range), as well as street activities to strengthen their projects. Spatial processes thus impacted positively residents’ initiatives and allowed them to more easily diversify their repertoires of action and gain greater political power in the city.

While activists have assembled broad coalitions and sub-community networks, they have also cleverly used political opportunity structures, political contexts, and political traditions in each city. They engaged the right municipal Departments in their projects – and at times built upon the competition between several Departments or Office – to gather support. In Boston, for instance, residents, leaders, and community workers engaged and sometimes played on the competition between the Department of Neighborhood Development and Parks and Recreation Department. In Cayo Hueso, the planning organization GDIC was a strong ally of the TTIB workers, but also of other individual leaders in the neighborhood. Activists in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley also sealed open and covert alliances with key municipal state officials, and eventually attracted funding sources by proving their commitment to their neighborhood as well as their political savviness. They were able to maneuver through the convoluted layers of municipal and at times national policies, structures and contexts, and this, thanks to the variety of coalition and network members around them. For instance, in the Casc Antic, lawyers and architects filed official claims to European Commission and pointed at the lack of respect of existing PERI plans by the City of Barcelona.

Last, community identity and place attachment have proven to be core strategies in resident organization. From the start, community leaders and organizations have cultivated positive attitudes and civic energy among residents about the neighborhood and developed community narratives around them. They have organized workshops emphasizing popular and local history in Cayo Hueso and Dudley as well as activities showcasing neighborhood struggles in Casc Antic and Dudley. They have also led recreational activities, festivals around specific landmarks, and artistic celebrations, as well as coordinated the design of murals to create a

strong narrative about the neighborhood. Such use of local identity is based on the tenet that if people value and love their place, they will become more engaged and to take part in environmental improvements and concrete projects. In turn, community identity has become strengthened over time, and residents' sense of community and place reconstructed in a more optimistic and positive way. Residents feel a tighter connection to their place and a stronger desire to protect it. Residents also re-negotiate meanings and images associated with their space and local identity. Community identity thus fulfills multiple roles: it is the motivator for action, it is a tactic to be used to gather support, and it is an end goal to reshape and strengthen over time.

In short, cities and urban marginalized neighborhoods resemble each other more than countries. Residents experience marginalization, exclusion, and abandonment but also community ties, relations, and dynamics in quite similar fashion, which lead them to focus on similar actions, agendas, and strategies on the ground. Active residents and leaders of traditionally distressed neighborhood construct similar forms and strengths of attachment, experience long-time exclusion and traumas, and develop a sense of responsibility and care for their neighborhood, which are more important than a differing development settings and political contexts in accounting for holistic environmental revitalization work, community rebuilding, broader political agendas, and construction of strategies and tactics over time. At the local urban scale, it is possible to advance that broad differences in levels of development and democracy do not matter as much to community-sponsored and -led initiatives as the ways in which individuals and groups interpret and feel exclusion in the city and experience place attachment as a motivator for action and use it as a strategy for building support around them.

6.1.4 Core differences between Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso

These common patterns of neighborhood engagement, agendas, and strategies do not mean that the three neighborhoods are exempt of differences and nuances.

The baseline conditions in each place reveal inadequate living and sanitation conditions, lack of parks, green space and recreational facilities, and substandard waste management. In both Cayo Hueso and Dudley, residents have also suffered from nutrition issues because of a low availability of fresh produce and healthy food. Dudley residents have a disproportionate rate of obesity and cardiovascular diseases while Cayo Hueso residents are often undernourished, which was particularly true during the first years of the Special Period. In the Casc Antic, access to healthy food was never a pressing issue since fresh markets and produce are easily available throughout the neighborhood, even though, in recent years, residents have complained that gentrification threats are driving food prices up, and groups such as the Xarxa de Consum Solidari have initiated work around healthy local and affordable food. Furthermore, the intensity and impact of neighborhood abandonment and decay took different forms in each neighborhood: Dudley displays the most dramatic decay and transformation in two decades with violence and arson coupled with authorities closing their eyes on criminal activities and dumping. By the mid 1980s, 1,600 lots had become vacant throughout the neighborhood, which looked like a bombarded area. In the Casc Antic, public authorities did attempt to revitalize and redevelop the old town upon the return of democracy in 1975, but the projects they pushed for brought with them intense social and environmental impacts such as mobbing, expropriations, dumping, and abandonment. Last, in Cayo Hueso, the equity policies promoted by the Castro revolution after

1959 led planners to neglect have and let old neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso degrade, with buildings becoming structurally unsafe and public spaces undesirable and unwelcoming.

Some variations can be also underlined in regards to experiences of racial discrimination and social exclusion. First, racism and racial discrimination by authorities, developers, and other residents has been much more abrupt and violent in Boston than in Cuba, and even less in Barcelona. In Cuba, racism against Afrocubans has manifested more in private spheres in regards in particular to their social and cultural traditions, and this despite government policies to eradicate racist attitudes. In the Casc Antic, residents had to face greater discrimination in regards to their social origins and types of activities they engaged in or the types of stores they opened in the neighborhood. Older residents from rural Spain who moved to Barcelona in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, perceive that there is no place for them any more in a redeveloped fashionable old town and that they are being excluded from the remodeling of Barcelona. Dudley residents were also faced with the impact of unwanted social behavior such as intense crime and violence, which added a layer of difficulty to their environmental revitalization work, as empty lots or abandoned green areas were often occupied by drug dealers. On the contrary, in the Casc Antic and even more in Cayo Hueso, crime and drug dealing was more limited.

To respond to poor habitat conditions and marginalization processes, residents initiated a series of environmental projects, with each neighborhood taking a slightly different path. In Dudley, activists originally took on massive clean-up campaigns along with protests against illegal waste management practices. They also took over empty lots and turned them into parks, playgrounds, and community gardens. Such transformation was facilitated by DSNI gaining the power of eminent domain over an area within Dudley. In parallel, other neighborhood organizations and leaders focused on technical capacity building on one side, and physical activity and healthy eating on the other side. In the Casc Antic, residents initially fought for six years against the City of Barcelona over the redevelopment of large empty lots in the Forat area of the neighborhood. As activists resisted municipal plans, they self-reconstructed the Forat as large green spaces, playgrounds and sports grounds, and community gardens. After years of conflict, the municipality finally agreed to permanently re-built the space into a green zone in 2007. In the 2000s, residents also devoted much effort to sanitation and building structures improvements, as well as waste management, additional green space, and physical activity. In Cayo Hueso, residents benefited from Castro's support at the end of the 1980s to more autonomous participation, and they creatively organized to bring in structural improvements to buildings, enhance waste management, and develop urban agriculture. Other leaders led more independent actions around physical activity for youth, environmental capacity-building, and environmental improvements based on art and cultural projects.

Similarities in broader political agendas are also not deprived of differences between neighborhoods. In Cayo Hueso, private urban developments sponsored by public officials do not exist at nearly the same scale as in Dudley and Casc Antic. Despite the presence of foreign tourist investments in the forms of clubs, restaurants, and hotels in Havana, such investments do not have a true relevance for Cayo Hueso. Threats of encroachment and gentrification are thus not as pervasive and immediate as in the Casc Antic or Dudley. In Cayo Hueso, activists fight to defend their space against omnipresent and controlling public authorities as well as against discourses and stigmas about the neighborhood, and Afrocubans more precisely. Activists attempt to control their land and its boundaries to ensure that they have – for the first time since

1959 – an autonomous and spontaneous right to participate and decide in their neighborhood. Such a right, in an autocratic regime such as Cuba, can not be expressed to the level of openness and visibility as in Boston and Barcelona. In the Casc Antic, on the contrary, activists are very vehement about their right to self-organize and self-manage green spaces and projects. Their rejection and distrust of public authorities lead many of them to refuse dialogue and negotiation with officials. In Dudley and Boston, the discourses of activists reflect a desire to achieve greater protection and even isolation from gentrifiers, tourists, and encroachers of different kinds. Residents are truly afraid that their neighborhood might become taken over and that poor and minority families would be forced to leave or not be able to access parks or recreational areas.

Variations in political systems had a limited impact on residents' activism in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso. In Cuba, at the end of the 1980s, the Castro regime opened up autonomous spaces of planning, decision-making, and implementation through the TTIBs, and this upon civic pressure to reform the regime, which gave support and legitimacy to neighborhood-led projects. Furthermore, the government did not manage to get a hold on more independent and radical initiatives such as the Callejón de Hamel, which achieved legitimacy on their own with a lot of international media and artist support. In Barcelona, the last year of Franco's dictatorship saw the growth of a dynamic civil society proposing projects and leading contestations. Until today, residents have been quite radical in their engagement and have claimed their right to openly contest inequitable public policies in their neighborhood. Boston, a well-established democratic city has seen minority and marginalized residents asking the municipality to hear their concerns and respond to the abuses they were facing. However, they often had to take action on their own as political leaders originally remained passive. In short, the three neighborhoods displayed different intensity of activism, but their residents nonetheless organized independently in the city, and had to become legitimate actors vis-à-vis planners and officials.

In regards to the selection of strategies and tactics, some nuances exist between cities. In the initial stage of resource seeking and sharing, activists could not be as open and transparent in a closed system like Havana, while they were more visible in Boston, and even more visible in Barcelona where the demonstration of concrete action and very broad support was key to confront municipal plans to build hotels and parkings. In an autocratic regime like Cuba, extensive and open protests were obviously not possible. However, activists launched clever and subdued types of contestation through space occupation and through open complain letters written by children, signed anonymously by a wide variety of residents, and sent by community leaders with strong ties to political officials. They also built clever alliances with state officials whom they knew to gain support for their work and they used their reputation in the city to leverage power and resources. Last, community identity was used in slightly different ways in each neighborhood. Cuban activists resorted to artistic manifestations such as rumba events or peñas as well as historic workshops led by community leaders, Barcelona residents organized more informal festivities, cookouts, or festivals, while Dudley groups were focused on historic and cultural manifestations.

6.1.5 Internal tensions within neighborhoods

Residents in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso are not a uniform monolithic block with entirely similar values, interests, visions, and strategic and tactical preferences. This study

has focused on active residents, community leaders, neighborhood workers and their supporters, reflecting an interest and commitment to emphasize their experience and interpretation of environmental revitalization action performed over two decades. However, as natural and as expected, not every single resident or community worker has felt the need or interest to become involved in urban farms, gardens, farmers' markets, playgrounds, or community center planning. Not everyone in a neighborhood, region, or country is interested in participating in civic action. However, activists in each neighborhood have tried to promote greater engagement and participation from a variety of residents in neighborhood work, even in a punctual way. This has taken the form of gathering volunteers for clean-up and maintenance tasks or bringing in more participants in protests or contestation action. Their hope has been to build greater momentum for a long-lasting community-based revitalization, and they have been able to gather substantial internal support over time for different projects.

Despite the efforts of community activists to bring different residents together, enhance social coexistence, and address internal tensions within ethnic and cultural groups, divergences remain at times within each neighborhood. In Dudley for instance, conflicts have arisen around the management of the community gardens, with ethnic groups attempting to work their differences out. When differences have not been resolved, residents have taken on the creation of a new garden where different sorts of vegetables are grown and internal garden organization reflect other cultural dynamics. The tensions between groups have thus led to the burst of community gardens, with different types of residents coalescing around them and helping them grow. They are controlled by different groups – Dacia Woodcliff as an African American garden, Leyland Street as a Puerto Rican garden, etc – and mark clear sub-cultural boundaries within Dudley. In the Casc Antic, disagreements have emerged around the rebuilding of the Forat into a permanent space: Some older and more radical activists refused any intervention from the city on the territory, and even any investment, while more pragmatic and moderate activists agreed to the importance of using municipal funding to construct the Pou de la Figuera. Other disagreements surged with the construction of the new multisports arena in 2010 with some associations (AECCA) supporting the new space while others (youth organizations) criticized its over-institutionalization. In Cuba, some tensions remain between Afro-cuban activists and white community workers, such as the TTIB workshop workers. Supporters of the Callejón de Hamel often accuse the TTIB of displaying racist attitudes towards the cultural and social manifestations organized every week around Rumba activities, calling them dangerous behavior, even though in reality both “camps” work quite closely together in community projects.

Last, internal divergences between activists have emerged during the construction of strategic and tactical repertoires of action and during coalition building. Most tensions surfaced vis-à-vis attitudes towards municipal officials and city planners, especially in Barcelona and Havana. In the Casc Antic, divisions have been acute between squatters and older residents who completely distrust the community engagement practices of the municipality and wanted to solve problems fully on their own, on the one hand, and younger residents and activists who showed less radical and more pragmatic postures of negotiation and dialogue. In Cayo Hueso, some community leaders are more inclined to working within the socialist system of administration and planning while others display more subversive attitudes and refuse any engagement with official Cuban organizations such as the Poder Popular or the UNEAC (the Union of Cuban Artists and Writers). Such tensions show that coalitions are rather malleable and that different types of interests and values come together at times towards a certain project (i.e., the protection

of the Forat as a green space or the structural improvements to the Callejón de Hamel), but that identities and preferences can vary between individuals and groups.

6.2 Theoretical analysis

6.2.1 A refined understanding of environmental justice and public health

Traditional environmental justice literature provides a thick analysis of the disproportionate environmental burden suffered by residents of low-income and minority communities, as people are generally faced with a greater exposure to environmental toxins and other health risks than their white and wealthier counterparts (Bryant & Mohai, 1992; Bullard, 1990; Downey & Hawkins, 2008; Pellow, 2000; Schlosberg, 2007; Varga et al., 2002). To a similar extent, in the global South, mercury spills from mines, oil and timber extraction, deforestation and erosion from extensive farming, and hydroelectric dams have affected the lands and health of poor and minority populations (Ahmad, 1999; Brysk, 2000; Carruthers, 2008; Evans et al., 2002; Hilson, 2002; Martínez Alier, 2002). To date, despite notable exceptions, which are typically focused on the United States (Agyeman et al., 2003; Gottlieb, 2005, 2009; Pellow & Brulle, 2005), most EJ studies overlook the fact that residents and their supporters also fight to turn around their neighborhood and rally to achieve long-term environmental quality and livability. In other words, they come together in other instances than fighting against isolated and selective identifiable threats. Environmental justice publications, such as the *Environmental Justice Journal*, are in line with these historical trends, prioritizing studies centered on the “adverse and disparate environmental burden impacted marginalized populations and communities” rather than studies on the recent manifestations and interpretation of proactive and positive environmental justice action.

This study of distressed urban neighborhoods in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana aims at providing a more refined understanding of recent environmental justice action, and in doing so, in a systematic comparative empirical research and analysis. In other words, the efforts, narratives, and strategies of marginalized communities fighting towards environmental justice in cities do not stop at struggles against clearly identifiable “brown” contamination sources. My dissertation has focused on a variety of health and environmental improvements from the standpoint and experience of the residents and organizations working on the ground. Their vision is broad and encompassing, and provides a rather new lens on what constitute improved environmental conditions. The work of activists in each neighborhood reveals, for instance, that enclosed community spaces dedicated to physical activity, cafés and bakeries selling healthy food and offering safe opportunities for relationship building and meeting, contribute to improved environmental value for residents more than beautiful, well maintained, but empty and unused parks and playgrounds. Constructing a new sports and recreational complex in place of a vacant lot, which will bring people together in neighborhoods where outdoor playgrounds are structurally or contextually unsafe and where residents have no place to socialize, can be envisioned as poor residents’ idea of getting a green space and appears a very legitimate claim.

Likewise, public art projects that involve repair of unsanitary buildings, rehabilitation of unsafe alleys to play sports, and creation of artistic benches and fountains with recycled materials provide refreshing spaces for social and physical activity, while not being necessarily “green” at first glance. In other words, such initiatives in historically marginalized

neighborhoods should not and can not be automatically discarded as “non-environmental” or “non environmental justice” because their focus is not on eliminating a toxic factory or improving access to urban forests, but rather on providing safe common spaces for cultural manifestations of communities of color and improving the long-term livability of the indoor and outdoor space. Similarly, active residents interpret the notion of habitat very broadly: Their work is meant to enhance environmental conditions in the house as well as outside the house, hence the focus on both green building or sanitation improvements together with parks or playgrounds.

In Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, residents have a strong connection to their neighborhood through the ties they have built over time in it and through the history and traditions that it contains. In addition, their experience of the neighborhood made them realize the pervasive consequences of neighborhood abandonment, decay and degradation on environmental quality as well as on the local identity. This connection and realization, filtered by a sense of responsibility, a desire for personal growth and learning, and a commitment to the urban environment, have prompted them to become engaged in holistic environmental revitalization work. Here, environmental justice is intertwined with community development and it is important that they are not separated. EJ is part of a broader puzzle. Community development becomes a tool to advance environmental justice and reciprocally. Furthermore, environmental justice and environmental initiatives are more holistic than traditionally presented, as activists do not envision their work in silos or compartments (i.e., “housing”, “social work”, “job creation,” “nutrition,” etc) separated from each other. Activists have taken action in a wide variety of complementary domains – moving, for instance, from clean up to safe farming, green spaces to learning, or physical activity to education – which build on each other and reflect a natural continuum in the mind of activists. These are the tangible and concrete physical dimensions of place-based urban environmental justice.

In turn, these endeavors and the narratives activists have built around their neighborhood and their experience of it are meant to rebuild a broken community, fight against grief, loss and violence, create safe havens and refuges, and build an urban village with all its diversity and its aspects of self-sustainability. Such vision reflects protection, healing, resilience, and psychological health components of urban environmental justice work. Residents of marginalized neighborhoods have often suffered from trauma and what they have perceived as urban wars and destructions, and need to feel that they live again in a welcoming, agreeable, and nurturing environment. Activists’ commitment to the neighborhood broadens traditional understandings of environmental justice to include right to physical activity, healthy food, but also to recreational spaces and to places where people feel secure. Kids and youth need to be supported in their mental and physical development, hence the emphasis on safe havens, mentoring, and leadership development. Their struggles reveal that both physical and psychological dimensions of environmental health must be taken into consideration to achieve environmental justice

In other words, the work of active residents, community leaders, and neighborhood workers in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana show that urban environmental justice is truly embodied in the holistic revitalization of places where people play, learn, live and work all together. Here, the concept of urban sustainability becomes enriched with social dimensions which are not limited to poverty alleviation and job creation. Social aspects of urban sustainability include a core focus on community rebuilding, place reconstruction, and social

coexistence. They also encompass aspects of safety and security that go beyond the individual protection against physical, social, or financial damage and harm to include a greater sense of cohesiveness, wholeness, soothing, and nurturing.

Activists' endeavors thus offer an ecosystem health perspective to environmental justice initiatives. Ecosystem health does not only analyze the relatively limited effects of social and physical environmental factors on health. It also considers that people are participants within their dynamic social and physical ecosystem. Here, comprehensive community initiatives, such as those in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, which would qualify as embodiments of an ecosystem approach, promote positive change in individual, family, and community circumstances by improving physical, economic, and social conditions (Spiegel et al., 2001; Yassi et al., 1999). Such a view takes a whole system perspective – at the intersection of meeting basic needs such as food, energy, and shelter, while doing it in an environmental respectful way. Communities become more resilient and robust as they add the concept of wellness to the equation of environmental revitalization.

Spatial justice is the allocation of socially valued resources (i.e. jobs, political power, social status, income, social services, environmental goods) in space, and the opportunities to make use of these resources over time (Marcuse, 2009b; Soja, 2009). The stories of environmental revitalization in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic reveal the centrality of space in urban mobilizations and show that environmental mobilizations are situated and rooted in a specific site (Franquemagne, 2007). Space does actually acts as a motivator and reinforcing factor in neighborhood struggles. Space is a constitutive element of collective action and not simply in the background. Community organization in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic is a case of collective socio-territorial protest and collective discursive production around the idea of spatial justice.

Spatial justice, as represented in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, encompasses five dimensions. First, activists fight against spatial inequalities in the provision of environmental goods such as fresh and healthy food, recreational spaces, and parks. Second, spatial justice encompasses the right for residents to construct and strengthen individual and collective identities through new construction and uses of space and spaces (i.e., parks, playgrounds, farms) in their neighborhood. Activists create safe havens and other places where residents feel protected and nurtured. They remake their neighborhood as a physical location, a social place, and an imaginary space. Third, residents' endeavors towards community rebuilding are oriented towards both the inside (*Gemeinschaft*), outside (*Gesellschaft*) of their community, as well as the border space in between. Residents must control urban development dynamics as well as their territory and its borders to feel that their right to their neighborhood is respected and spatial justice achieved. Fourth, the protection of spatial capital seems essential to achieve spatial justice. Historically distressed communities are not empty of social and spatial capital, contrary to common beliefs and policy advocates for de-concentration of poverty. Spatial capital allows residents to find comfort and support as they work to improve the environmental quality of their place in the long term. The protection of their relations with community leaders and core anchor organizations as well as the preservation of street life dynamics and resources are crucial to their ability to stay in their neighborhood and increase its livability. Last, spatial justice involves a certain type of democratic planning and participation – with the opportunity for activists to spontaneously act on the territory according to their own democratic and planning processes,

which creates in turn more buy-in and participation from residents in revitalization projects.

That said, this comparative research in Havana, Barcelona, and Boston reveals that the environmental component of justice in “environmental justice” is fundamental. In fact, it questions the claims of political theorists such as Edward Soja who assert that spatial justice is an encompassing category of all forms of justice claims in the city. This study thus creates bridges between planning and public health scholarship through a qualitative examination of the multiple dimensions of health and environmental health present in environmental revitalization endeavors in traditionally distressed communities as summarize in Figure 14 below:

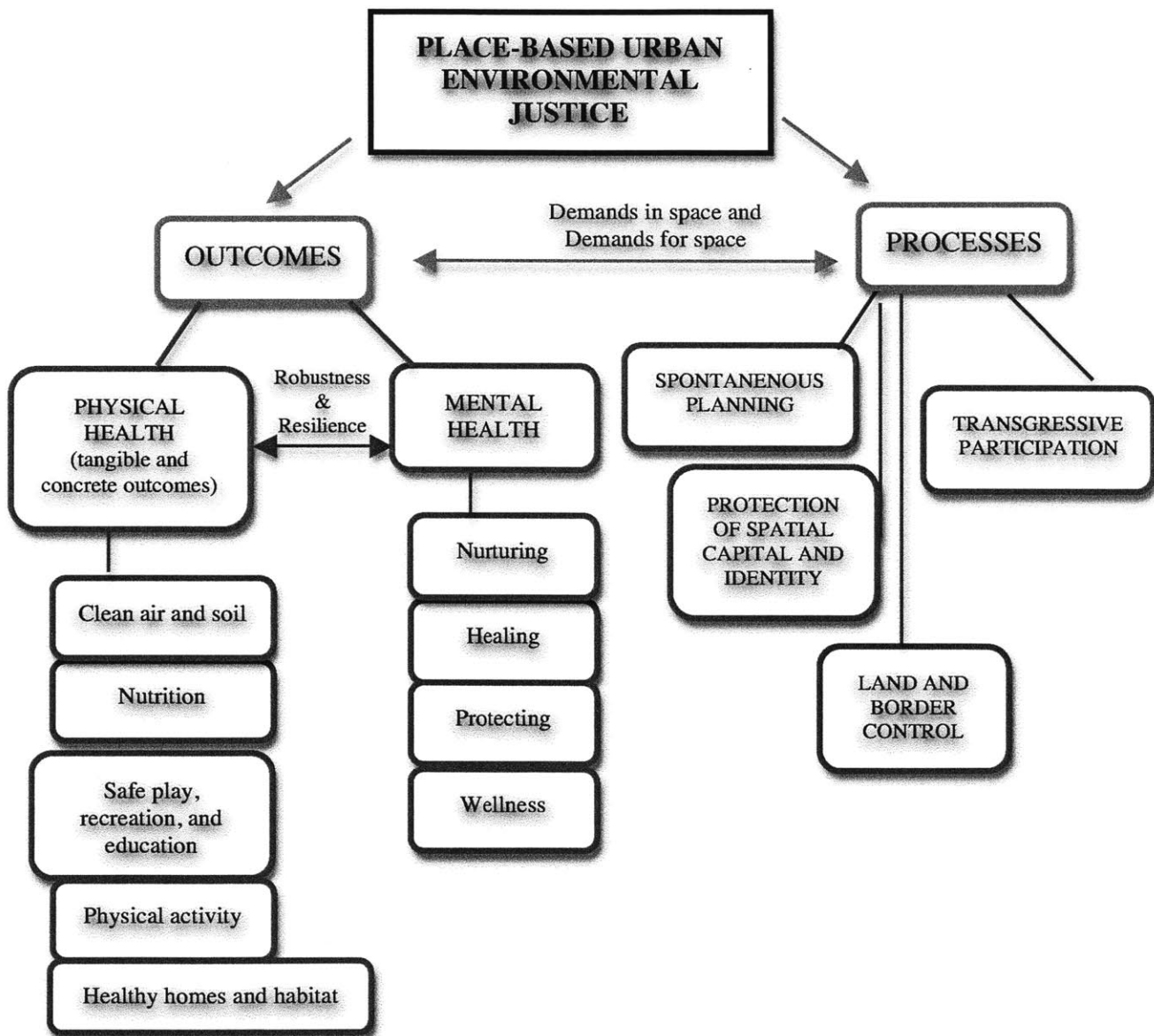


Figure 14: Proposed New Framework for Environmental Justice

6.2.2 Environment as a tool rather than an end per se

People's attachment to their place of residence and to their community is strongly tied to the formation of their identity and the protection of this identity. (Altman et al., 1992; Kefalas, 2003; Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). Place identity originates in people's relation to the physical, political and environmental world around them and is shaped by their experiences and interactions with others (Bondi, 1993; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Proshansky et al., 1983). In traditional distressed neighborhoods, residents have created particularly strong roots in their place and the relations they have built in it, and have in turn developed bonds of mutual support (Manzo et al., 2008). Furthermore, place attachment creates motivation for residents to interact more with their neighbors and invest more time in it through, for instance monitoring developments in the neighborhood or participating in community planning (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Cohrun, 1994; Davidson & Cotter, 1993). In the environmental arena, threats to people's environment have been shown to trigger residents' involvement into eradicating them and has led residents to claim a greater voice in decision-making processes (Edelstein, 2003; Rich et al., 1995; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001).

The stories of activists in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley reveal that place attachment and sense of community are certainly motivators for local action (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Cohrun, 1994; Davidson & Cotter, 1993). However, this action takes new forms, as residents do not fight against traditional threats – in relation to safety, property, social programs, or contamination (Blum & Kingston, 1984; Cox, 1982; Davis, 1991; Fainstein, 2006; Fisher, 1984; Gotham, 1999; Pattillo, 2007; Peterman, 2000; Venkatesh, 2000) – but rather towards improved environmental quality and health outcomes. Residents are not only reactive but also proactive. They are attached to their place of residence and want to make it more livable. In turn, environmental revitalization feeds back into local community identity and place attachment. Projects serve as tools to achieve social goals related to strengthening the place and helping the neighborhood flourish from within. The meaning of their mobilization is associated with anchoring themselves in memories and healing. Identity gets reshaped and reframed in the process of community mobilization and through the interactions with decision-makers and city planners. Ultimately, this vision for place remaking eventually feeds back into stronger attachment, individual and collective pride, and community engagement. Place-remaking is thus a dynamic and dialectic relation and process with a positive feedback loop. Residents' postures and fights demonstrate that contemporary global cities do not all lose their accumulation of shared history, host only transnational identities, and that public space become only privatized (Sassen, 1998). The mobilization of activists contends affirmations about the role of global cities, in which attachment, memories, and engagement are perceived as being dismantled.

Such agendas are oriented towards the inside of the community. However, activists also frame their vision and demands in relation to the broader changes that their neighborhood and city have experienced. The transformation of the urban economy towards a more decentralized, global, and technology-, finance-, and service-focused restructuring has been accompanied by rising socio-economic inequality (Friedmann, 1986; O'Connor, 2001; Sassen, 1998). As a response, residents have attempted to resist the disruptions and degradations of their neighborhoods and the violence of private accumulation (Harvey, 1981; Smith, 1982). Recently, urban movements have come together around broad claims and progressive values to build a revitalized, cosmopolitan, just, and democratic city (Fainstein, 1999, 2006). Such demands are

present in the Right to the City framework, which often encompasses economic and environmental justice demands with fights against real estate speculation, privatization of public space, gentrification, along with rights to land, and demands for greater democracy and human rights (Connolly & Steil, 2009; Marcuse, 2009a; Mitchell, 2003). Their claims are in line with the idea of the “good city,” a city with an active civil society, resisting within a framework of democratic institutions, and establishing minimal political, economic, social, and ecological conditions necessary for communities to thrive (Friedmann, 2000).

The histories Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley reveal that activists are truly using their environmental work to fight against broader development processes that affect the stability and homogeneity of their neighborhood and that gentrification, excessive encroachment, and tourism are particularly relevant in their mobilization. That said, their ultimate goal goes beyond resisting such urban dynamics. They aim at changing images and stigmas about their neighborhood since their residence is imbued with negative images and racist stereotypes oriented towards its inhabitants, their socio-economic conditions, and an overall state of degradation and neglect. More importantly, they aim at taking control over their land and have established clear borders with outsiders in a process of differentiation of “us” versus “them.” Their projects have helped them construct and maintain physical, social, and cultural, and symbolic borders with a dominant society (Lamont & Molnar, 2002; Wilson & Donnan, 1998). Environmental endeavors become a tool for land and border control as well as for sovereignty claims. At a broader scale, residents frame political goals in regards to democratic processes in the city. Their demands are more transgressive and daring than traditionally presented by “just city” theorists: Activists ask for self-management of land and projects as well as more spontaneous forms of participation and dialogue – not just a reframed deliberative democracy. They also often see themselves as part of a political trajectory and are in self-representation mode. Many activists can not leave outside political claims, protests, and political involvement and are aiming to train seasoned political actors around them. In short, environment becomes a tool for deeper social and political agendas, which must in turn be disaggregated by scale.

6.2.3 Adaptability and malleability of strategies and tactics in urban neighborhoods

A variety of direct action and institutional strategies have allowed communities to address environmental and health threats. Such strategies range from multiparty dialogues or negotiations (Susskind & Macey, 2004), corporate social responsibility schemes (Cashore, 2006; Newell, 2001), direct and confrontational tactics such as lawsuits against companies, denunciations and shaming, release of information on toxic substances, pressure for greater government oversight of industrial activities (Bandy & Smith, 2005; Bullard, 1990; Diaz, 2005; Green, 1999; Pellow, 2001; Pellow, 2007; Shrader-Frechette, 2002), as well as co-produced knowledge (Corburn, 2005). In general, the selection of strategies is related to the structure and professionalization of a social movement organization (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998), its personal experience and knowledge (Jasper 1997), its values (DesJardins 2000; Schein 1985), and its political ideology (Dalton 1994; Zald 2000). Selection is also based on sense-making and acceptability of tactics (Carmin and Balser 2002). To date, however, very limited research has been conducted as a place-based and space-focused analysis of repertoires developed by urban activists in their fight for long-term proactive and positive environmental revitalization.

In Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Casc Antic, activists have cleverly developed a variety of

multi-faceted, flexible, and multi-tiered strategies and tactics to achieve environmental revitalization. Their strategies have been diverse because they respond to changing contexts and circumstances, for which residents had to display greater creativity and adaptability. Organizations had to get out of their traditional frames and tactics, and this due to the importance of space, urban dynamics, and relations between policy-makers and local civic organizations in the city. Individuals and groups fighting for improvement in life quality in the three neighborhoods do not truly represent a social movement, and community-located institutions are not SMOs, which makes traditional views on strategies and tactics and their selection rationale not fully relevant for this analysis.

Activists have first resorted to bricolage techniques to jumpstart their project. The idea of bricolage refers to actions and thoughts based on objects that pre-exist in someone's environment. People piece or assemble disconnected things together and act often in inventive ways (Lévi-Strauss, 1962). In doing so, they manage to create a new object, place, or project that reflect their vision. The use of bricolage and collage reflects their proactiveness and pragmatism. Activists need to take action swiftly to bring quick wins to their neighborhood. Activists also often compensated for a lack of material resources with resourcefulness (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Ganz, 2000; Tarrow, 1994). In this present study, resourcefulness takes a different and innovative dimension. It involves the use of culturally and context appropriate modes of diffusion and rallying of supporters, the gathering of a broad range of volunteers, the organization of youth and kids, and the use of reputation and fame to accelerate project development and completion. Activists have, for instance, used children and youth in each neighborhood to rally parents and other adult neighbors and eventually create long-lasting and broad engagement.

Institutional policy environments and political systems tend to mold and affect the types of engagement that activists adopt vis-à-vis decision-makers. States with high policy capacity seem to facilitate collective action with movements operating mostly within institutional channels (Kitschelt, 1986). Collective action – and a more direct and violent type of collective action – is shown to arise in contexts where political repression is less likely; otherwise, the costs of direct collective action, such as the suppression of the movement and the imprisonment of some of its leaders – might be too high for the contenders (Tilly, 1978). In Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, activists associated bricolage and resourcefulness with complaints, advocacy, protests, and space occupation to express their opposition to negative practices in the neighborhood. Contrary to existing assumptions, activists in an autocratic regime such as Cuba also resorted to complaints and contentious tactics, and they did so in a clever way – by associating respected figures in Cuba with their actions and by gathering broad support around them. Despite the presence of a state with quite a high policy capacity in Spain, activists often used open protests and demonstrations, and this to become more visible and continue on a long historical trajectory of social movements in the city. Political opportunity structures (POSs) traditionally refer to the context and resources that encourage or discourage collective action (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 1994). In Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, POSs take a new dimension: Local activists have strategically used political openings, favorable circumstances, and even existing political and institutional structures to achieve their community reconstruction projects.

The construction of coalitions has traditionally been helpful in supporting movements, (Eckstein & Garretón Merino, 2001; Foweraker, 2001; Gould et al., 2004; Green, 1999; Polletta, 2005; Tarrow, 1994). Transnational advocacy networks have also been shown contribute to movements' success (Porta and Rucht 2002, Keck and Sikkink, 1998, Shaw 2004, Pellow 2007, Bandy 2004, Rodrigues 2004). In Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley, neighborhood activists have effectively engaged in the construction of broad – but also unexpected – coalitions of supporters with similar interests and, often times, values, and this upon early quick wins. These coalitions were unexpected because they did not only involve traditional “green” or “blue” activists but also artists, academics, and architects. As they gathered support, activists also worked more informally within the neighborhood and developed what I call *sub-community networks* with loose and flexible connections. Local networks made of specific individuals and groups within or outside the neighborhood, which conduct both advocacy and community work, can be particularly useful in advancing residents' vision for community revitalization. These sub-community network take two forms: First, they are geographically composed of people and groups inside the neighborhood and are important from a spatial capital standpoint (Chion, 2008, 2009). Residents and leaders know each other well through the community and know how and when to resort to each other. People use the spatial characteristics of the place to advance their claims. Second, they are also sub-community networks in the sense of technical expert communities – knowledge-based experts in the (sub)-field or area that is most needed during the development of a specific project.

Community identity has been shown to be strategically deployed as a form of collective action and political strategy to empower neighborhoods and mobilize residents (Gotham, 1999, 2003; Gotham & Brumley, 2002). In Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso, neighborhood organizations and community leaders have used local individual and collective identity and place attachment as a strategy to build consistent and sustainable support for their projects and counter threats of encroachment and placelessness. Place attachment is thus a social and cultural resource. Community leaders have developed narratives around each place and organized events or workshops directed at reminding participants of the historical fights and accomplishments of the neighborhood. They have also used cultural and festive traditions, which are part of the neighborhood life, to rally residents and encourage their future engagement in projects such as neighborhood cleanups and maintenance or planning of new parks and gardens. In return, residents' sense of community and place has been reshaped and reconstructed through local mobilization, as residents also re-negotiate meanings and images associated with their urban space and local identity. My dissertation thus ties stronger connections between social movement and urban research on identity by analyzing the dialectic between mobilization – as shaped by community identity – and identity used as political strategy.

Activists' stories in Casc Antic, Cayo Hueso, and Dudley allow us to develop a new interpretation of mobilization and cycles of protest. According to Sidney Tarrow (1994), cycles of protest occur when the resources for collective action become available to ordinary people, enabling movements to spread to entire societies. In this research, the activists' accounts reveal that protests and contestation occur in alternating cycles with concrete community reconstruction projects and with dialogue processes. When the structures and content of dialogue and community-officials relations do not work according to the activists' priorities and visions, residents are likely mobilize to contest them and they also take autonomous action away from governmental engagement. For instance, in Barcelona, activists around the Forat have alternated

between the self-reconstruction of the abandoned space, massive protests or sit-ins, as well as negotiations with city planners. Alternate cycles of contestation, community reconstruction, and negotiation get built in Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Havana, with different actors and levels of engagement at times, depending on each actor's preferences and values and on differing local circumstances. Some actors are more maximalist and refuse dialogue, but some of their allies show a difference posture and take part in dialogue spaces with policy-makers, which then moves environmental revitalization forward – until a next stage in which contestation and protest might be needed again. Such a dynamic creates possibly indefinite cycles of protest in each neighborhood.

Through this longitudinal study of community revitalization, I show that coalition building does not fully account for an understanding of local mobilization and strategic repertoires of action, and this despite the attention coalitions have received in the social movement literature (i.e., Polletta, 2005; Tarrow, 1994). Malleable repertoires of strategies and tactics in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso reveal different layers, types, and stages of activism in each neighborhood: An activism by street and lay spontaneously-organizing residents and an activism by formal organizations and institutions. In an initial stage of bricolage, collage, and resourcefulness, neighborhood mobilization was rather unstructured and autonomous, without the clear and conscious construction of broad and varied coalitions. Such a construction of coalitions came at a later stage of project consolidation with members taking advantage of sub-community networks, working creatively within state structures and with public officials, and reaching for financial support. Furthermore, the importance of community identity reveals that some community activists took the lead outside coalitions and built on people's attachment and connection to the neighborhood. They acted quite independently and spontaneously to rally more resident support around environmental endeavors and worked to strengthen this identity over time. Through public events, workshops, festivals, and other cultural manifestations, they have reminded residents of the struggles and accomplishments of the neighborhood over time, and developed greater engagement in local action. Neighborhood mobilization thus encompasses both spontaneous and structured tactics on a space in which coalition building is a core part of repertoire development, but not the only part of it.

6.3 Study limits, methodological contribution, and future research

The common criticism raised about case study research is that findings can not be generalized to an entire population of individuals, families, or – in this case – other neighborhoods or cities. Case studies are seen as providing only weak basis for scientific generalization and as having a limited external validity (Yin 2003). How can I be certain that the questions I have tried to answer in my research about urban revitalization, place attachment, political agendas, and strategies or tactics would be answered in similar ways if I had chosen to study Bangkok, Moscow, and Paris rather than Barcelona, Boston, and Havana? A short answer is that case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions, but not to entire populations (Yin 2003). Case studies are not part of a sample and I am not aiming to generalize my findings to an entire group of cities or neighborhoods in the global North and South. I attempted, as demonstrated above, to use my three case to expand and generalize existing theories rather than to enumerate frequencies. I focused here on environmental justice theory, the relation between place attachment and community engagement scholarship, as well as theories of urban change

and social movement theory. In that sense, the theory of community mobilization for improved environmental quality in marginalized neighborhoods that led me to choose the case studies of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso in the first place will be the same theory that will help to identify other cases in which the results are generalized.

One can wonder about the appropriateness of selecting cases with so much apparent variation between them. How can Havana be in the mix of cases knowing that it is part of a socialist, centralized, and autocratic regime? I selected these cases as part of an inductive approach to research. I was first struck by similarities in discourses and tactics as I first met activists in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Barcelona. I soon after realized that a comparative analysis of their mobilization over time would be quite compelling, and this because residents took similar action and showed similar commitment to their neighborhood in a variety of political systems and contexts of urbanization. In a few words, I was interested in understanding to which extent democracy versus dictatorship and developed city versus developing city mattered in local neighborhood work. How do differences in political systems impact the strategies and tactics that activists select to achieve their goals? As described previously, and contrary to common wisdom and existing studies, such differences between Boston, Barcelona, and Havana do not drastically impact activists. A generalization beyond theoretical propositions is thus tempting. It is quite intriguing to unravel similar patterns of community engagement in cities that are at first glance so dissimilar from each other. Over time, my findings show that the ways activists have organized and gathered support around them to address deeper marginalization issues entailed similar patterns and dynamics.

In this regard, the common patterns across neighborhoods and cities unraveled in this study demonstrate the importance and value of the cross-national and longitudinal comparison I conducted here. Traditional international development scholarship and urban studies tend to privilege comparison across similar socio-economic development contexts or political systems, and have only recently started to bring in comparisons across development settings (i.e., Inam, 2005). Conventional scholarship has often neglected to consider how neighborhoods and communities in dissimilar economic, cultural, and political settings mobilize against similar hardships and challenges and what commonalities researchers might find across cases to explain similar positive outcomes or processes. Here, I show how activists across a spectrum of development conditions and democratic settings manage to achieve improvements in socio-environmental conditions, leverage power vis-à-vis planners and decision-makers, and how their visions and ambitions became a basis for questioning broader political and institutional systems in each place. I thus attempted to emphasize the power of case comparison across apparently “too” different countries and cities in one single study.

Another limitation in this study stems from the selection of critical and emblematic cases of neighborhoods mobilizing for improved environmental quality. This selection criterion renders the analysis of other historically marginalized neighborhoods in each of those three cities quite compelling from a control standpoint. It might have been interesting to introduce a control case in each of the city. A different study could ask why did Dudley residents take swift action to revitalize their place while residents in Mattapan, another low-income and distressed neighborhood in Boston did not (until recently). At a different scale, why did residents in Boston assemble forces to revitalize marginalized neighborhoods while residents in Portland, Maine might not have focused on environmental problems to the same extent? Are the conditions of

abandonment and degradation so extreme in the Casc Antic or Dudley that activists had no other choice than taking action? I would argue that conducting a qualitative study such as the present one with control cases is not fully relevant from a design standpoint since asking individuals why they did not do something, or why do they focus on such problems rather than others might not necessarily lead to rich and analyzable answers. There are a million reasons why people do not take action. In this research project, I chose to focus on why people do took action, to which extent their actions, meanings, and strategic engagement vary, and to do this by comparing cities across a variety of political systems and urbanization contexts.

In the future, it would be particularly interesting to conduct a comparative analysis of the inner-city neighborhoods studied in this project with neighborhoods located in the outskirts of Boston, Barcelona, and Havana to understand how community reconstruction around environmental revitalization and residents' and organizations' strategies are affected by living or working in a more transitional and non-structured geographical setting, in which community attachment and sense of place might not be as deeply grounded as in historic downtown areas. In Cayo Hueso, Casc Antic, and Dudley residents are very attached to the history, past, and activism of their centrally-located neighborhood. Such roots might not as strong in suburban communities, informal settlements, or favelas areas. It is worth asking if different marginalized individuals and groups use similar symbols, stories, or imagery to address environmental inequities, contest spatial exclusion, and oppose existing stigmas. Do spatial and historical processes influence the types of organizational endeavors and repertoires developed by different low-income communities? Such studies would shed new light on the relation between space, identity, agency, and community organization in a variety of spatial settings.

As much as my dissertation has attempted to bring in a historical and longitudinal perspective on community awareness and mobilization in regards to environmental degradation and abandonment, it would be important to better analyze the processes by which emotional connections to places get born, evolve, last over a life span, and then lead certain residents and leaders to become so involved in neighborhood work. This is related more generally to the relative absence of place attachment and community identity in the community planning and development as well as in the environmental justice literatures. To date, much of the research on community connections has taken place in the environmental psychology field, which has itself mostly focused on individual experiences and meanings rather than collective ones. On the other hand, the planning and environmental justice literature do not tend to examine personal experiences of place and attachment, and rather limit their analysis to neighborhood-level processes and external forces that impact neighborhoods. Further bridging these fields would lead to fruitful new knowledge and help policy-makers better understand the relation between space, place, and community organization in favor, for instance, of certain environmental projects, -- and not others.

6.4 Policy and planning implications

This study has several important policy and planning implications. Without imposing generalizations from the stories of only three neighborhoods, their experiences are quite informative as examples of success in community revitalization. They are inspiring for other communities around the world. So what led to the success of Dudley, Cayo Hueso and Casc Antic? Several pre-requisites can be tentatively formulated for other communities. First,

residents of disenfranchised neighborhoods are more likely to achieve their goals if they initiate projects on their own through bricolage and collage techniques coupled with innovative kinds of resourcefulness. Such techniques will create quick wins, which would then serve as motivators for gathering support around them, increase the legitimacy of community action vis-à-vis other residents and outside policy-makers and funders, and eventually lead to durable outcomes. The strong and consistent help of committed community members and leaders will also serve to build greater political momentum and capacity over time. Furthermore, the construction of wide and unexpected coalitions together with the use of sub-community networks is extremely helpful for harnessing a variety of technical and legal support as well as media attention and consolidating projects. The case of Casc Antic also reveals that residents might not always need the support of environmental NGOs. Very few “pure” environmentalists joined the Forat fights. Such a reality stems from the fact that most environmental NGOs based in Barcelona work in rural Catalunya on ecosystem protection and also from the fact that the few NGOs with local programs in Barcelona are financed by the municipality and do not feel comfortable taking part in more contentious action (Interview with Fundació Natura, 2009). For activists, having open and covert supporters in the municipality also protects residents and gives them important tools, information, and resources to move forward. Last, the more activists are able to combine concrete community work and coalition and network building with festive activities and local traditions, the more likely they are to draw sustained involvement from residents.

When faced with civic demands such as the ones formulated by activists in Barcelona, Boston, and Havana, policy-makers must confront two difficult dilemmas. Their first dilemma is how to balance demands for safe havens while minimizing risks of self-segregation. In fact, as community members attempt to control their land and its borders and provide a sense of protection for residents, they also build a self-sustained and contained community with its selected membership. To some extent, they re-privatize public spaces for their own uses and make their territory exclusive, and this with a certain support and legitimization by local planners and politicians. This is especially true in Dudley and Casc Antic. On the other hand, their desire to live in a more homogeneous and familiar community reflect both a desire to protect oneself against alienation and threats to the fabric of the neighborhood as well a self-declared preference to live among with residents from similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds (Wilson & Hammer, 2001). More racially homogenous spaces help develop and strengthen a shared racial identity, can have a cathartic soothing effect away from the pressures of inter-ethnic relations, while bolstering their ability to deal with negative racial relations (May, 2001). However, such homogeneity can be a threat to the “ideal” of diversity and “good city” planning. They can re-create pockets of isolation and ghettos throughout the city. The question remains open for planners on how to balance a need for self-retrieval and protection with a desire of diversity and mixity in the city.

The second dilemma is related to questions of urban sustainability and how planners can make cities more livable and more environmentally strong while also considering community demands for memory and rootedness? Such a dilemma stems from internal fights in Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso about the role of memory in urban sustainability. Often times, dense urban neighborhoods do not have the space to accommodate new parks, playgrounds, and urban farms, especially as they also have competing demands for housing. The production of new environmental goods often involves taking down existing buildings and spaces, to which minority residents are strongly connected, and whose erasure signifies a feeling of loss and

uprooting and sometimes leads them to retrieval. Decisions over land uses in historically marginalized neighborhoods become then highly complex and loaded. How can win-win results be achieved? A possible answer comes from observing residents demands in regards to self-management and spontaneous participation. If residents feel that they are able to intervene themselves on a space and lead projects in which they have to decide how to achieve this balance between environmental sustainability and memory, they might then become savvy planners and will feel less uprooted from the space. Furthermore, in the United States in particular where environmental justice laws and grants exist, funders could incorporate criteria of cohesiveness, nurturing, and protection into their decisions to support specific projects. In general, funders in other countries should also ensure that dimensions such as community identity and place attachment are not relegated in the background when planning towards more livable and just cities.

The activists' engagement in a variety and far-reaching environmental revitalization projects reveal that environmental justice can not be envisioned without community development and vice versa. In the minds of local activists, it is necessary to develop urban farms, community markets, parks, smaller green spaces, or sports and playgrounds grounds together with multi-purpose community centers, healthy and green housing complexes, as well as welcoming venues for healthy food and community activities and job opportunities. The vision for neighborhood transformation should be holistic and thought-of carefully. However, our planning practice remains often compartmented with little emphasis on holistic visions for environmental justice and community transformation. The experiences of residents in Cayo Hueso, Dudley, and Casc Antic call for reforming of existing environmental revitalization projects in cities – ensuring greater coordination between neighborhood development Departments, public health Departments, environmental Departments, and youth and recreation Departments. Funding for community groups and organizations could and should be better coordinated and streamlined between those entities, with the help of program managers who are both engaged with these municipal departments and well respected from and grounded in urban neighborhoods.

Last, residents and their supporters put much emphasis on process and the importance of renovating existing democratic practices at the local level. Often times, the perception is that planning and policy has been top-down with a distorted deliberative democracy discourse which is disengaged from the communities and rooted in a growth machine criteria. The cases of the three neighborhoods in Havana, Boston, and Barcelona reveal that this does not have to be the case and that more innovative and genuine planning can take place, with greater space for spontaneous, more informal, and community-led processes. A deeper democracy does not necessarily mean a better working deliberative democracy or democracy based on protests and social movements, but rather a local democracy where cycles of autonomous and at times anarchical planning and neighborhood action alternate with negotiation and dialogues, on the one hand, and with contestation practices, on the other hand. Such iterative processes between neighborhood reconstruction, dialogue, and contestation can and should exist, in which one helps further the other in situations where power differentials and challenging intercultural and socio-economic relations are central elements for planning in distressed urban neighborhoods.

6.5 Final thoughts

The neighborhoods of Dudley, Casc Antic, and Cayo Hueso have without doubt achieved concrete environmental and health improvements throughout the past two decades. The energy of their residents and the commitment of their supporters inside and outside the neighborhoods have proven crucial to their present success. Activists' stories also reveal that building a different future for youth and children is omnipresent in their work. These young residents have the right to a welcoming, secure, green, and equitable neighborhood where they can live, play, and eat healthily. However, a few questions remain: What will the next generation of residents experience? Will they remember the achievements that adults have achieved? How can the current successes be sustained over time? What are the best ways to involve this new generation in local projects? It is possible that what their parents or what youth organizers have reached will not be maintained if younger generations decide to leave, when elder leaders pass away, or if municipal or national dynamics (in Cuba in particular) change drastically. Many community organizations put an emphasis on bringing youth and kids in their activities and in empowering them to have a greater say in planning and decision-making over their land. That said, we will need to look at places such as the Leyland Street Community Garden, the Food Project farms, the Callejón de Hamel, the Quiero a Mi Barrio gym, or the Pou de la Figuera in ten years to assess whether the vision of local activists has been preserved and even strengthened over the years.

Creating environmental requires more sustained engagement and most likely a greater sense of place and community attachment than addressing an environmental injustice threat or accident. It involves a holistic transformation of processes and outcomes in traditionally forgotten urban communities and a recognition by planners and decision-makers that these communities present value, spatial and social capital, and that residents and their family have a right to their neighborhood. To make changes and improvement more enduring and building stronger political power, a series of five prescriptions may be formulated for other communities around the world:

- 1) Build up on showcase quick wins thanks to bricolage techniques and resourcefulness. Organize yourself cleverly and develop your internal capacity
- 2) Pick your moment and stages for action carefully. Alternate between community work, contestation, and engagement with policy-makers and planners
- 3) Choose partners diligently and do not hesitate to rally unexpected supporters who can build up your power and whose interests are similar to yours even if values and tactical preferences might differ
- 4) Understand urban political structures and dynamics precisely to build open or covert allies, and create value for yourself and your group
- 5) Strengthen residents and activists' sense of community and attachment to the neighborhood and use it as a political strategy

In this study, I have tried to propose a new framework for studying place-based urban environmental justice action based on the initiatives and projects that active residents, local leaders, neighborhood workers, and their supporters have created in Dudley, Cayo Hueso, and Havana: urban farms, community gardens, farmers' markets, parks, playgrounds, small green spaces, sports grounds, community centers, healthy homes, and improved waste management. For two or three decades, activists in Boston, Barcelona, and Havana have fought for proactively improving the environmental quality and livability of their place in the long term through a series of projects that have transformed their neighborhood socio-environmental conditions, rebuild a broken community, and also contributed to broader community development.

I have argued that developing a more refined theory of environmental justice for marginalized urban neighborhoods requires achieving, protecting, and sustaining specific outcomes and processes. Such outcomes take the shape of tangible and concrete improvements in regards to physical health: clean air and soil; healthy and affordable nutrition; safe play, recreation, and education; physical activity and sports; and healthy homes and habitat. Outcomes also include supporting residents in relation to mental health aspects. In profoundly degraded, abandoned, and traumatized neighborhoods, families, youth, and children need nurturing, healing, protection, and wellness. Overtime, it appears that working towards improved physical health and mental health outcomes will create greater robustness and resilience. Several processes must also be incorporated for communities to achieve urban environmental justice: controlling neighborhood land and territory as well as building and protecting borders; promoting forms of spontaneous planning and transgressive participation; and finally protecting spatial capital and place identity. It seems that, only under these conditions, can a healthy environment be the place where all people live, work, learn and play.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviews – Barcelona

Semi-Structured Interviews

Silvana Ospina, Incita (2) (2009)
Marta, Ecoserveis (2009)
Jeremie Fosse, Ecounión (2009)
Enrique Ibanez, Asociación de Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella (2009)
Laia, RAI (2009)
Joan, Herboristeria and Asociacion de Veins en Defensa de la Barcelona Vella (2009)
Maria Mas and Pep Miro, Associació de Veins del Casc Antic (2009)
Vice President, Asociacion de Comerciantes Calle Carders (2009)
Paco del Cuerpo, Colectivo del Forat (2009)
Maria, Hort del Forat (2009)
Gemma and Carola, Municipal Community Workers, Equipament del Pou (2009)
Marc, Fundacio Casc Antic (2009)
Albert, GENAB (2009)
Elisenda Ortega, Former Community Engagement Officer for Municipality of Barcelona (Ex Cap de Territori) (2009)
Melanie, EICA (2009)
Jordi Fabregas, Director of the Convent de San Agusti (2009)
Manolo, Hort del Forat (2009)
Marc Aureli Santos, Architect Municipality of Barcelona (Ex Cap de Projecte) (2009)
Paco, Volunteer, Hort del Forat (2009)
Jordi Milaro, Xarxa de Consum Solidari (2009)
Mohammed, informal volunteer Hort del Forat (2009)
Rafa, former Youth Educator, Adsis (2009)
Jordi Jovet, Fundacion Comtal (2009)
Hubertus Poppinhaus, Social Architect and Member of Associació de Veins en Defensa de la BCN Vella (2) (2009)
Esperanza, Dominican Mother, Associació Los Rios en Catalunya (2009)
Pep Dalmau, GENAB (2009)
Emili Cota, Plataforma de Entidades de la Ribera (2009)
Emanuela, Volunteer Arquitectos Sin Fronteras (2009)
Eduardo Moreno, Lawyer (2009)
Carme Gual, Foment de Ciutat Vella (2009)
Khadeja, Moroccan mother and volunteer (2009)
Virginia, Companya Moki Moki (2009)
Eva, Arquitectos Sin Fronteras (2009)
Dani Mateos, Asociacion Portal Nou (2009)
Isabel, Volunteer Hort del Forat (2009)
Merche and Montse, AECCA (2009)

Isabel Martinez, Architect and member of ICARIA (2009)
Pere Cabrerias, Architect and Executive Director ARI (2009)
Mónica, squatter (2009)
Oscar Martinez, Cooperativa Porfont (2009)
Jorge Sanchez, FAVB and Associació de Vecinos Casc Antic (2009)
Miguel Rene, Environmental Technician, Municipality of Barcelona (2009)
Rosa Garriga, Municipality of Barcelona, District Ciutat Vella (2009)
Francesc Giro, NGO Acció Natura (2009)
Chema Falconnetti, Movie Director (2009)

Informal Conversations

Angel, Volunteer Hort del Forat (2009)
Joan Garcia, Ecoconcern (2009)
Prof. Manuel Delgado, Universitat de Barcelona (2009)
Three Dominican women living near the Pou de la Figuera (2009)
Felix, fruit and vegetable shop owner in the Forat (2009)
Owner Bar Joanet (2009)
Nadja Monnet, Universitat de Barcelona (2009)

Appendix 2: Interviews – Boston

Semi-structured Interviews

Vidya Tikku and JoAnn Whitehead, Boston Natural Areas Network (2009)
Charlotte Kahn, Ex-Boston Urban Gardeners (2009)
Susan Redlych, Ex MA Corporate Wetlands Restoration Program and Volunteer at The Food Project (2009)
Sister Margaret, Project Hope (2009)
May Louie, DSNI (2009)
Marlo Pedroso, BNAN and Boston Gardeners' Council (2009)
Greg Watson, Ex-Director of DSNI 1995-1999 and currently Executive Office of Executive Office for Energy and Environmental Affairs. (2009)
Peter Bowne, Earthworks (2009)
Penn Loh, former Executive Director, ACE (2009)
Drew Forster, Croc Foundation (2009)
Bing Broderick, Haley House (2009)
Garden Coordinator Savin/Maywood Community Garden (2009)
Paul Sutton, Boston Parks and Recreation Department (2009)
Eric Seaborn MA Department of Conservation and Recreation - Urban and Community Forestry (2009)
Susan McDougall, The Food Project (2009)
Jess Liborio, The Food Project (2009)
Nelson Merced, Ex Alianza Hispana (2009)
Betsy Johnson, South End Land Trust (2009)
Andria Post Ergun, Department of Neighborhood Development (2009)
Mel King (2009)
Evelyn Friedman, Department of Neighborhood Development and former Director of Nuestra Comunidad Development Cooperation in Dudley (2009)
Aldo Ghirin, Boston Parks and Recreation Department (2009)
Travis Watson, DSNI (2009)
John Walkey, Urban Research Institute (2009)
Jose Barros, DSNI (2009)
Father Walter Waldron, St Patrick's Church (2009)
Jose, garden coordinator at Magazine Street (2009)
Pansy Carlton, garden coordinator of Leyland St. Extension (2009)
Alexandria, The Food Project (2009)
Tunney Lee, MIT Professor (2009)
Alma Finneran, Garden Coordinator Monadnock St, CG (2009)
Marcia Butman, Discover Roxbury (2009)
Trish Settles, Ex DSNI, (2009)
Andrea, Director of the Shirley Eustis House (2009)
Tubal Padilla, ex-Porto Rican leader (2009)
Carmen La Torre, Garden Coordinator at the Jardin de la Amistad (2009)
Mike Kozu, Project Right (2009)
Honorio, Capeverdean leader (2009)

Dawn Chavez and Bo Hoppin, Boston Youth Environmental Network and Dearborn School Garden (2009)
Kathe Mc Kenna, Haley House (2009)
Melida Arredondo, Upham's Corner Health Center (2009)
Alice Gomes, community organizer (2009)
Lisa Chapnick, Ex Department of Public Services, City of Boston (2009)
Jeanne Dubois, Dorchester Bay Development Corporation (2009)
Chuck Turner, City Councilor (2009)
Andrew Bailey, Riley Foundation (2009)
Julie Stone, Boston Schoolyard Initiative (2009)
Anne Mc Hugh, Boston Public Health Commission (2009)
Brandy, Body By Brandy (2010)

Appendix 3: Interviews – Havana

Semi-structured Interviews

Caridad Cruz, FANJ (Fundación Antonio Núñez Jimenez) (2009)
Rafael Hernandez, ICAIC (2009)
Rosa Oliveras, GDIC (2009)
Rosa, Casa del Nino y Nina de Cayo Hueso (2009)
Pablo, Casa del Nino y Nina de Cayo Hueso (2009) (name changed)4.
Project Director, Centro Felix Varela (2009)
Program Coordinator, Ayuda Popular Noruega (2009)
Ester Perez, MLK (2009)
Mujeres Jardineras, Barrio de San Isidro (2009)
Jesus Figueredo, MLK (2009)
Ex-Director, GDIC (2009)
Mario, Local Community Leader (2009)
Noemi Reyes Herrera, Taller de Pogolotti (2009)
Mario Coyula, Architect, planner, and former staff member at the GDIC (2009)
Rafael Betancourt, Local representative Instituto Canadiense de Urbanismo (2009)
Maria del Carmen Espinoza, TTIB Cayo Hueso (2009)
Armando Fernandez, FANJ (2009)
Arsenio Garcia, UNICEF (2009)
Cristián, Instructor de TaeKwando en el Beisbolito (2009)
Martha Chan, Researcher INHEM (2009)
Olga, Volunteer Espada 411 (2009)
Eduardo, Manager of the CTA area of the organopónico, (2009)
Joel Diaz, Director of the TTIB (2009)
Elias, Historian of the Callejon del Hamel (2009)
Joel Suarez, staff MLK Center (2009)
Jaime, Coordinator Quiero a mi barrio (2009) (name changed)
Estela Rivas, Historian of Centro Habana (2009)
Modesta, community leader, Espada 411 (2009)
Gladys and Luciano, Permaculture practitioners (2009)
Coordinator of the Mercado Estatal de Cayo Hueso (2009)
Gisela Arandia, Taller La California (2009)
Salvador, Callejón de Hamel (2009)
Cecilia Linares, Centro Juan Marinello (2009)
Laritzza Gonzales, CIERIC (2009)
Froilan y Adys, Popular Writers Cayo Hueso (2009)
Roxana Mar, MD in Cayo Hueso (2009)
Jesus “Lara,” local artist (2009)
Iñaki, Local representative Save the Children (2009)
Maité, Former staff member at the Plan de Rehabilitación Urbana del Municipio de Centro Habana (2009)
Jerry Spiegel and Analee Yassi, Professors at University of British Columbia (2009)
Deyni, Coordinator Proyecto Moros y Cristianos (2009)

Miguel Coyula, Planner and staff member, GDIC (2009)
Felix Janes, staff member MLK (2009)
Graziella, Mariana Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (2009)
José Luis, Manager of the Organopónico (2009)
Evaristo, Delegate of Urban Agriculture, Cayo Hueso (2009)
Former Program Director, Oxfam (2009)

Informal Conversations

Mayra Espina – CIPS (2009)
Other Taekwando teacher (2009)
Fragua Martiana

Appendix 4: Constructing Grounded Theory

A) List of Nvivo free nodes after line-by-line and paragraph coding for Research Question #3/Chapter 5 on strategies and tactics

This list illustrates the list of free nodes developed in Nvivo through a line-by-line and paragraph coding of interview documents, observation and participant observation notes, and secondary data documents. "Sources" refers to the number of sources (= documents) in which a specific free node (i.e., "Advocacy and lobbying") appears, and "References" indicates the number of total references relevant for this node. A source can have multiple references. Nodes with a larger number of sources and references are generally the most salient ones. This stage of analysis helped me select, sort, and separate data into broader categories (Charmaz, 2006). I built a total of 30 free nodes for my analysis of strategies and tactics.

Strategies and Tactics Free Nodes		
Name	Sources	References
Advocacy and lobbying	23	51
Attachment to neighborhood, its history, its social movements	54	198
Bricolage and Collage	33	102
Celebrations and parties	19	35
Claim discussion and planning during socio-cultural events	21	31
Competition and conflicts between civil society groups and organization	6	16
Confluence of disaggregated interests together from various groups	3	4
Contestation and protest to construction to dialogue as a cycle	29	103
Cultural and art and spiritual dimensions of environmental projects	20	83
Denunciations, complaints, occupations, and provocations	22	51
Environmental education as form of empowerment	24	58
Fundraising, funding, and grants	28	78
Leader (importance of) and role of inspiration and guide	18	45
Leadership and social capital development	50	198
Negotiation and dialogue (emphasis on) and space of discussion and debate	26	55
Organizational strengthening	7	16
Organizing at the community level	31	97
Political opportunities and positive political context and broader public policies	7	28
Politicians need to support neighborhoods for their own benefits	8	11
Pride over improvements and comfort in neighborhood and need to cultivate pride	31	67
Public private partnership and city relinquishing its power and control	9	21
Quick wins as ways to bring neighborhood together	13	27
Reputation as a tool	6	23
Resourcefulness and non-material resources	27	71
Sub-community networks and loose and flexible connections and partnerships	55	227
Technical studies reports and evaluations and documentaries	4	12
Unexpected and broad coalitions	54	189
Use of Place Attachment and Community Identity and Memory and Place characteri	17	59
Volunteers (use of) and their work and dedication	15	23
Youth and Children (organizing around them, using their spontaneity)	15	39

B) Examples of quotes within the free node “Bricolage and Collage” for Casc Antic, Dudley, and Cayo Hueso

This series of quotes below are an excerpt of some of the raw data that was analyzed and incorporated into the free node called “Bricolage and Collage.” This raw data from interviews, observation and participation observations, and secondary documents was coded through a line-by line and paragraph coding. “Reference” and the number next to it indicate the number of excerpts from a particular source (i.e., an interview) used for a specific node, such as Bricolage and Collage. “Coverage” and the percentage next to it indicate the percentage of a source (i.e. interview) that a particular excerpt or quote covers. The value of the coverage and reference illustrate the salience and importance of an excerpt or quote within a node.

<Documents\Barcelona\07.16.2009 Virginia Compania Moki Moki> - § 1 reference coded [9.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.09% Coverage

Luchamos con nuestras herramientas. Hacemos politica a nuestra manera. Conocemos a RAI con el teatro. Cada uno ponemos nuestro granito de arena.

<Documents\Barcelona\6.18.2009Laia RAI transcribed> - § 1 reference coded [2.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.24% Coverage

Hubo un espacio un poco más limpio y más que se había hecho de a poquito que se habían visto crecer las plantitas los bancos, yo que sé, el campo de fútbol.

<Documents\Barcelona\7.14. Hubertus Poppinhaus transcribed> - § 4 references coded [1.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.30% Coverage

Hicimos plantadas, plantada general, sábado 16 de noviembre y venía la gente con macetas y plantaban árboles, arbustos.

Reference 3 - 0.49% Coverage

Entonces y de forma anárquica, había okupas que llenaron de macetas públicas de otros sitios, arrancados y los ponían en el Forat, cada uno como podía... Pero al final lo impresionante es que se logró un espacio verde, es que deberías haberlo visto. Tengo fotos antes de que lo han derribado, tengo las fotos. Y al final estaba así.

<Documents\Barcelona\7.19.2009 Merche y Montse transcribed> - § 7 references coded [7.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.82% Coverage

Sí que es verdad que el mogollón lo llevamos entre 3 o 4 madres que somos las que estamos más, porque también a lo mejor, por ejemplo yo me encargo más de todo lo de las subvenciones, como yo me entero y con otra madre que también se llama Montse, nos quedamos a las 5.00 de la noche, a la hora que sea para montarlas para poder subsistir.

<Documents\Barcelona\news articles forat de la vergonya> - § 2 references coded [0.71% Coverage]

Reference 2 - 0.53% Coverage

Los vecinos convocaron una cadena humana el pasado 11 de abril que impidió el avance de las maquinas que pretendían llevar a cabo el derribo. Todas las asociaciones se oponen al plan del Ayuntamiento e insisten en que nunca han recibido respuesta a sus propuestas alternativas

<Documents\Boston\10.14.2010 Interview with TS Ex DSNJ> - § 4 references coded [7.27% Coverage]

Reference 2 - 2.12% Coverage

Dennis Street Park kind of organized itself. We were just kind of a facilitator after. We were able to bring the resources there that people were kind of demanding anyway. It was just a matter of listening and then being able to kind of um, listening kind of gleaming to what the issues are and at some point if you can bring some resources to

bear often they are there to help you kind of point those resources in the right direction. Whether the resources are just stack time to another community, neighborhood clean up or look hey we've got money to put into benches and Dennis Street park was one of these parks where well hey, we've got a resource how do we do it? Let's put benches here and here. Oh, we've got another resource. And maybe like the resources are tiny, very piece meal for a long time but at some point after doing a piece meal project for a long time it develops enough of kind of a community momentum around it that it really drives itself.

<Documents\Boston\12.10.2010 Jeanne Dubois Dorchester Bay> - § 3 references coded [2.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.53% Coverage

So we did a lot of clean ups here and here. We did a lot of tree plantings here and here. We've identified other green spaces. And then we had a, we built a playground, the whole neighborhood built a playground.

<Documents\Boston\9.29.2009 Nelson Merced La Alianza Hispana transcribed> - § 3 references coded [2.83% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.45% Coverage

And that was a strategy you know, similar to the strategy people have in some cities where they board up the houses because they can't do anything then they paint scenery on the houses, on the boarded up plywood. This was the same thing you know, you have all this vacant land so we might as well throw grass seeds and flower seeds and stuff like that and just create a meadow. And so that was the theory at the time and people said that's a good idea. Let's try to clean it up as much as we can and we will do annual cleanups and, the whole dump on us, don't dump on us campaign, really sort of the alternative is once you stop the dumping then you can plant grass and gardens and stuff.

<Documents\Havana\10.28.2010 Rosa. Casa del Niño y de la Niña transcribed> - § 3 references coded [2.23% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.18% Coverage

400 kids wrote a letter in the government gave us the space. We received a donation from UNICEF and parents also helped to repair it. Kids planted seeds.

<Documents\Havana\10.28.2010 Former GDIC Staff 1, 3.13.2010 transcribed> - § 2 references coded [1.5% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.11% Coverage

The crisis cut to people of way of thinking which was that the state was going to result everything. So this many people evolve towards individualism and looking on their own for the solution to their problems themselves.

Reference 2 - 0.10% Coverage

Lower middle class people invent things themselves. Today half of the dwellings in Havana are slums. People work in state enterprises only to steal materials. And they work on weekends for private people.

<Documents\Havana\11.02.2010 Coordinator, Quiero a mi Barrio transcribed> - § 3 references coded [2.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.14% Coverage

One day, I was in front of my house and noticed that there was a un-utilized space. How was it possible that I did not notice it before? So I started "hacer gestion". Inside, it was worse than a Dracula movie. You could not open the door. There were insects, fecal water, sewage, flooding, and no light. But this did not scare me. I started working there with community students. We did a cleaning work. We have not received any urbanistic help. Everyone gave pieces. One brought cement, other something else, and we did it little by little. Now, Save the C is going to repair the toilets for us. We also have received help from Puerto Rico – they were karate practitioners from Puerto Rico. There is a gym, a workshop for plastic arts. All the gym and the machines in the gym were built by us and the kids.

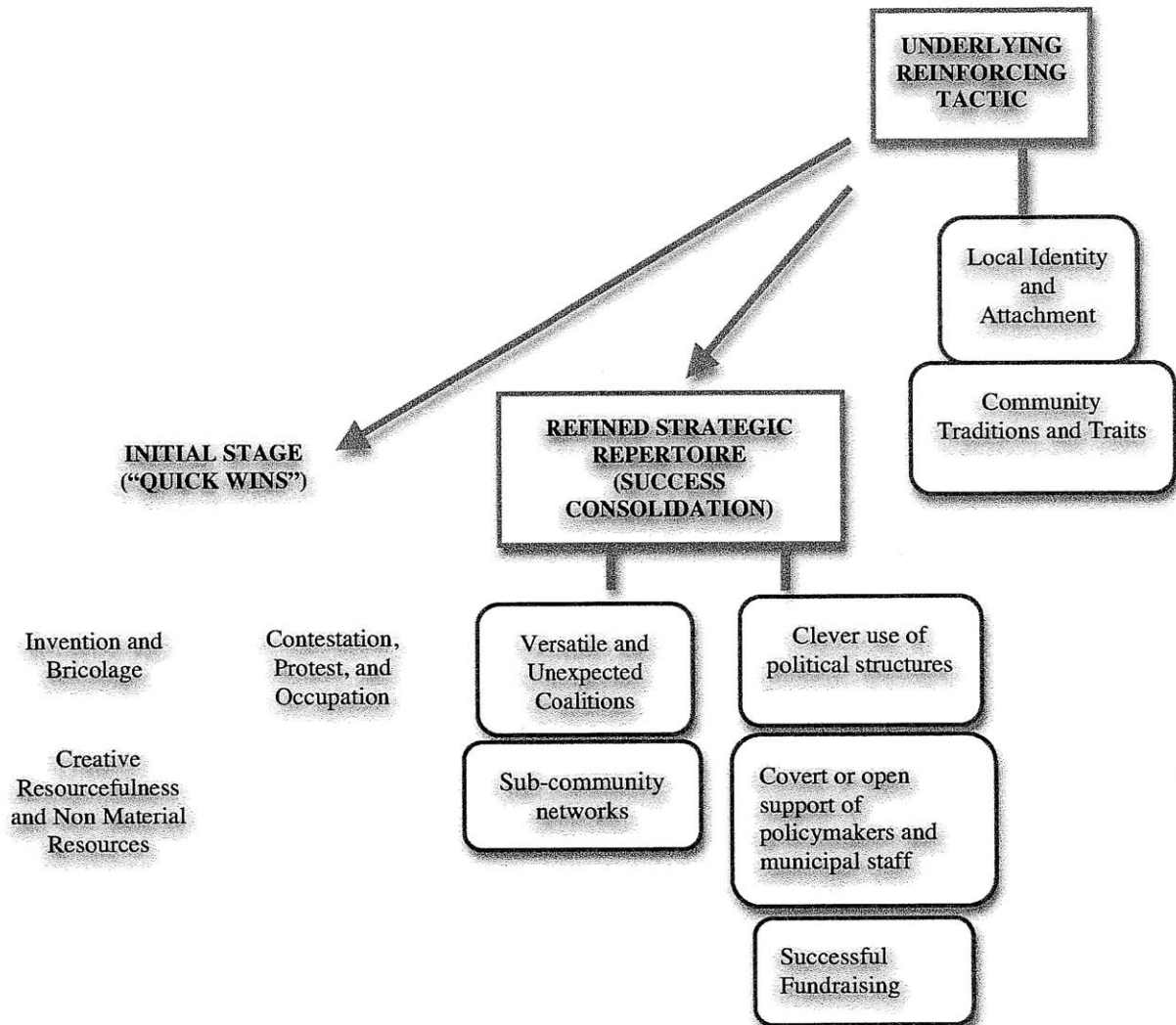
C) Focused and Axial Coding: Reassembling free nodes into larger theoretical concepts and patterns

In a second stage of data analysis called Focused and Axial Coding, I used the most significant and frequent free Nvivo nodes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize my data into theoretical concepts in order to refine its meaning and start developing larger theoretical concepts (i.e., “Inventiveness and Creativity”). I related categories to sub-categories and reassembled the data I had fractured into Free nodes during line by line and paragraph coding to bring more coherence to the emerging analysis. Here I chose the coding that made the most sense to categorize my data more incisively and completely.

Focusing and Axial Coding Categories	Sub-Categories (based on Free NVivo Nodes)
Inventiveness and Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contestation and protests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Advocacy and lobbying * Denunciations, complaints, occupations, and provocations - Bricolage and Collage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Quick wins as ways to bring neighborhood together - Resourcefulness and non-material resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Leader (importance of) and role of inspiration, guide, and guarantee * Reputation as tool * Volunteers (use of) and their work and dedication * Youth and Children (organizing around them, using their spontaneity)
Coalitions and Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sub-community networks and loose and flexible connections and partnerships - Versatile, mixed, and often unexpected coalitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Confluence of disaggregated interests together from various groups
Clever Engagement with Officials and funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grants, funding, and fellowships - Negotiation and dialogue (emphasis on) and space of discussion and debate - Political opportunities and positive political context and broader public policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Politicians need to support neighborhoods for their own benefits * Technical studies reports and evaluations and documentaries - Use of broader social and political traditions - Public private partnership and city relinquishing its power and control - Supporters and allies in state or municipality.
Use of community Identity and place Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attachment to neighborhood, its history, its social movements - Use of place attachment and community identity as well as memory and place characteristics - Celebrations and parties - Claim discussion and planning during socio-cultural events - Cultural and art and spiritual dimensions of environmental projects - Pride over improvements and comfort in neighborhood and need to cultivate pride.

D) Constructing relationships and models

This model below illustrates and summarizes the common patterns of strategies and tactics used by activists in Casc Antic, Dudley, and Barcelona. It is based on the different layers of coding work, pattern construction, and relationship building between findings, as well as on process tracing techniques, which I used to unravel the development of strategies through time and stages.



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